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DAVID AND FREDERIC EWEN

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MUSICAL  
VIENNA



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NEW YORK · WHITTLESEY HOUSE · LONDON  
MCGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY, INC.

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PUBLISHED BY WHITTLESEY HOUSE  
A division of the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

*Printed in the United States of America by The Maple Press Co., York, Pa.*

“**I**F IT is true that I have talent, I owe it above everything else to my beloved city, Vienna. . . . In its soil is rooted my whole strength, in its air float the melodies which my ear has caught, my heart has drunk in, and my hand has written down. . . . my Vienna, the city of Song and Spirit, which sets the boy lovingly upon his feet, and upon the mature man ever lavishes her sympathies. . . . Vienna, the city of beautiful women, who inspire and bewitch the artist. . . . Vienna, the heart of our beautiful, God-blessed Austria, the golden empire!”

—JOHANN STRAUSS (*the son*).

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## *Prologue*

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THIS is the story of a city that was once gracious and charming, famed for its beauty and culture, but famed, above all, for the great tone poets who lived there.

A queen-city that drew to itself all that was greatest in music, and that ruled musical life for almost two hundred years.

A city that impressed its unique character and life upon its music.

A city whose streets and houses speak unforgettably of Gluck and Beethoven and Mozart and Schubert and Brahms.

A city in whose palaces, opera houses and concert halls were written some of the most impressive chapters in the history of music.

A city in which brave men dreamed great dreams and brought them to life in spite of want, enmity and never-ending cabal.

A city whose cultural life is at an end.

This is Vienna's musical story—and requiem.



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BOOK ONE

ROCOCO

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WHEN Christoph Willibald Gluck returned to Vienna in 1748, and once more looked upon the city in which he hoped to found his fortune, he recalled the first sight he had obtained of it twelve years before. Then he had come on foot out of Bohemia, a big, large-boned peasant of twenty-two, with a square jaw, high cheekbones and a rugged complexion. Behind him lay the roving and insecure career of a wandering musician. Conscious of his great talent, he had been forced to sustain himself by singing in church choirs and playing at village fairs. His eyes had naturally turned toward the great city of the Habsburgs. He had heard that the munificence of the Emperor, Charles VI, had endowed it with a court orchestra and an opera at an annual outlay of 200,000 gulden, and had drawn to his court the most notable and gifted foreigners. If not the Emperor, then surely some gracious music-loving noble would befriend him—say, young Ferdinand Philip Lobkowitz, on whose immense Bohemian estates the elder Gluck had been forester.

And now, he made his way once more through the busy commotion of the streets. From the Graben down to the palace of the Lobkowitzes, the familiarity of the city warmed him anew. He thought of the heartening friendship of his patron, Prince Ferdinand Philip Lobkowitz, at whose palace he had learned to know much of the life of Vienna and many of its most distinguished citizens. Here he had met the men whose music filled the Viennese with delight and admiration, Antonio Caldara and Johann Joseph Fux. He had learned much in those few months he

had spent at the palace, and he had been happy. He had become conscious as never before of his own destiny. Within him had grown the assurance that he was some day to rival and perhaps surpass the most gifted of the Italians, who, flocking to the imperial city, had brought with them the grace and high artistry of Italian music and language, so that it seemed to many that Vienna was an Italian and not a German town. For though Austria was rich in interpreters, she was poor—all too poor!—in creative musicians. Occasionally, the works of the Germans were performed. But the musical palate of the Viennese aristocracy reacted with keener zest to the Italian style. The operas that Gluck heard in Vienna were those of Alessandro Scarlatti, Marcello, Durante and Sammartini. Even the court poet—Metastasio—was an Italian.

Gluck had been happy in Vienna in those days; yet he had not been sorry to leave, feeling the need to learn and study. When Prince Francesco Saverio Melzi offered to take him to Milan, Gluck accepted readily. The years of wandering that followed brought him to strange places and taught him much. In Italy he studied under Sammartini and wrote his first Italian operas; in England he met with the none too gracious Handel; in Hamburg, Leipzig and Dresden he officiated as the conductor of an itinerant opera company. Then back to Bohemia, to the bedside of his dying father.

And now, Vienna once more.

Self-assured he returned to the city after an absence of twelve years. In appearance he might seem out of place in the palace of Lobkowitz, to which he was directing his steps. A squat figure, solid and somewhat broad, a large

perhaps, of a peasant risen in life. The hand that held the gold-knobbed cane was large and heavy. The eyes alone betrayed the poet. They were imperious, direct and far-seeing. They spoke unmistakably and clearly. The large hands and the big body would do the things these eyes saw and the mind commanded.

He came back no longer a petitioner, but one whose fame was already established. He could do the things others had done as well as they; but few knew—and he was among the few—how much better he would do them soon. With the certainty of genius he would carve his way—the new way of creating music—carve his way through envy, obstacles and enmity.

Chief among those who were to bar his road was the great poet, Metastasio. Long the favorite of the court—he had come to Vienna in 1730—he had ruled without peer or rival. Who now recalls the innumerable court dramas which flowed from his pen at the behest of his princes, and then were set to music by Porpora, Caldara, Leo, Hasse, and even Gluck? Who now can thrill to his perfumed lyrics, as unreal as the love of which they spoke? What mind is now curious enough to unravel the intricate plots of his tragedies? Yet he was a man of indubitable talent, and occasionally of great lyrical power—a dramatist of gifts and rich fantasy. But like the rest of his aristocratic age he was bound by the traditional requirement to treat classical or Biblical materials in the “grand manner” relished by courtiers and kings.

The “grand manner” had suited those other composers. Metastasio little suspected that the Bohemian recently returned from his travels would soon rebel and order things his own way. But for the time being Gluck, too, would take the cue from the poet and adapt him-

self. He, too, would do as others had done, perhaps even better, and bide his moment. He, too, would write in the florid manner of the Italians, so as to set off the marvelous virtuosity of the Italian *castrati*. His time would come. Then, farewell Metastasio!

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## 2

THE Gothic spire of St. Stephen's is visible from a great distance. St. Stephen's is the heart of the city, almost at its very center. From it, in ever-widening circles, the town spreads out—in the eighteenth century still narrow, but already bursting beyond the confines of its bastions and fortifications into the neighboring hills, the very foothills of the Alps.

In those days, a walk around the city's ramparts might have taken two hours. But the soul of the city—that which was its very life and beauty—was contained within a few streets. If you entered Vienna by the Kärntnertor—the southern gate—you would on your way have passed the most exquisite of Viennese dreams, the Belvedere, palace of Prince Eugene. From the gate you made your way into the inner city without difficulty, guided always by the towers of St. Stephen's. If, upon entering the city, you turned slightly to the left, you would come upon one of the numerous and spacious market places, the Neuer Markt, famed for the beautiful fountain designed by Georg Raphael Donner. You might stop for a moment to gaze upon the figure of Providentia, surrounded by the four river-goddesses—an enchanting example of Italian art.

If you still kept on to the left, you would come upon the Schweinemarkt, and the Lobkowitz palace, already celebrated for beauty and hospitality. From here it was but a short walk to St. Stephen's.

Beyond St. Stephen's you came to the confines of the city, the Roter Turm, and one of the arms of the Danube. Farther still, by way of the drawbridge, lay the outer city—Leopoldstadt, with its two parks: to the left, the Augarten; to the right, the Prater.

But if—attracted by the continual flow of men and carriages—you turned left at St. Stephen's, you would at once find yourself in the busiest of Vienna's streets, Am Graben. Here was the Vienna for which you were looking—the noise, the movement, the idiom. At one end of the square stood the most ornate example of the Austrian baroque—the Pestsäule, the Commemoration Column—designed by Fischer von Erlach, with its innumerable sculptured figures in daring ascent. The Graben led into the Kohlmarkt, in the eighteenth century already noted for its congestion and forbidding rents. Soon you became aware of the drift of the streaming crowds. For the Kohlmarkt brought you directly to the Michaelerplatz. Here was the church; here the Burgtheater; and, to the left of the theater, the entrance of the imperial palace. You passed through the archway into the vast courts of the palace, and from there you reached another of the city's gates.

If you crossed the moat at this point you were on your way to Schönbrunn—the palace of the Habsburgs.

At the opposite—the northern gate of the city—the road led to hills and mountains of Leopoldsberg, Kahlenberg, Grinzing, Heiligenstadt and Döbling. Already these outer districts were encroaching on the city.

But the city held them off with its bastions and fortifications, which, if they no longer served to keep out the enemy, at least made beautiful promenades for the elect.

\* \* \*

To Gluck, Vienna appeared a fathomless and immense city, with its tall white baroque buildings, the innumerable palaces built in the Italian style, the sumptuous shops, the monuments and the busy movement of its streets. It had the perpetual atmosphere of a Gargantuan fair. Amorphous, like the empire of which it was the center, it was alive with the life and speech of twenty tongues—the outpost of the Western world (the East menacingly at her gates), the doorway to Italy. Vienna, rich with the open and vivid life of the south and the grace and elegance of the north, was Florence and Paris in one. In her streets—narrow, sinuous, muddy—could be heard a babel of tongues: Italian and the gruff German, Magyar and Spanish, Bohemian and Flemish. In her market places were to be found the wares of the whole world.

The city lived much of its life in the streets. And out of these streets rose her theaters—the theater of the market place, set up by itinerant traveling actors or by Vienna's own native sons. A theater, crude and homely, the spontaneous theater of the people, grotesque, natural, bitter with Billingsgate thrusts at the court and the Church. A theater immortalized not in the formal drama, but in sharp momentary buffoonery. For a long time Hanswurst, the buffoon, held forth in the market squares—the Freyung, the Judenplatz or the Neuer Markt. Then he moved into a little playhouse hard by the gate of the city—the Kärntnertor-theater.

Vienna's streets often echoed with the strains of music. Of a summer evening there were serenades, *Ständchen*. Said a contemporary journal:

You will find almost every day, if the weather is fair, serenades in the streets, and that too almost every hour, sometimes even at one o'clock and later. These serenades consist not, as in Spain and Italy, of the singing voice accompanied by a guitar, mandora or a similar instrument . . . but of trios, quartets, mostly drawn from the opera and consisting of several voices, and wind instruments, sometimes even of an entire orchestra. You will hear performed the greatest of symphonies. . . : Soon you notice the folk at the windows signalling their approval, often asking for encores, often even accompanying the musicians to other spots:

It was a city rich with excitement and inspiration. Gluck breathed deeply as he walked its streets again. It was good to be back.

### 3

TWELVE years had brought much change into the life of the city. Charles VI was dead. Since 1740 a woman ruled the empire. Maria Theresa had ascended the throne at a moment when it seemed that the all-powerful empire, built up for centuries, was on the point of crumbling. The armies of Charles VI had been defeated by the Turks. The incompetence of his generals had cost him Naples, Sicily, Lorraine and Serbia. The state of finances was chaotic. The burden of debt was so heavy that, according to a contemporary account, it would have been difficult in 1739 to find twenty persons who could raise 20,000 gulden without hardship. Maria Theresa inherited a public debt in excess of 100 million gulden. The extravagance of Charles VI—his military ventures and his costly personal expenditures—had sucked the country

dry, bankrupting the rich and further reducing the poor.

A contemporary chronicler records the profound dismay and uncertainty which greeted the accession of the Empress. Some eyes even gazed longingly toward Bavaria, where Charles Albert stood ready to enforce his claim to the Austrian throne. The throbbing city of Vienna might well have been affrighted by the prospect of another war, greater hardship and heavier taxation when it had scarcely recovered from the last one.

Maria Theresa appeared to many as perhaps the last of the Habsburgs.

Twenty-three years old, then, she faced a disordered empire at home and envy and enmity abroad. Half a world seemed united against her: France, Prussia, Bavaria, Spain, Sardinia and Saxony. Moreover, a new star had risen over Europe—that of Frederick the Great. And for the first time Hohenzollern faced Habsburg. (For good and for evil their fate was to be intertwined until both were to go down to their doom together one hundred and seventy years later.)

Soon Frederick and his allies were on the march, and another cycle of wars began. But Maria Theresa, through the magnetism of her personality and the strength of her will, rallied to her cause first Hungary and then England. The impoverished army of Austria was reinforced and consolidated. There were defeats on the battlefield, but victories as well. By 1748 Austria knew partial peace. She had forfeited Silesia, Parma, Piacenza, Guastalla, but in spite of this the empire was unified beyond the wildest expectations of her most devoted subjects. Once again she occupied a position of dignity among the powers of Europe. And Maria Theresa's right to the throne was universally recognized.

The historian, Adam Wolf, writes:

She was taller than most women, but her figure was well-proportioned, and even when she was older she carried herself well. She possessed a beautiful complexion, and rich blond hair. Her eyes were bright gray and sparkling, her nose gently curved, her mouth finely carved. She had small white hands and small feet. Her walk was graceful and elastic. She was one of the most beautiful women in Europe, as had been her mother, the Empress Elizabeth.

She was a proud and indomitable woman. While there were wars to be fought, she fought them; and if for the time being she was defeated, she took her defeats calmly and awaited the day when it would be her turn to win. Proud and self-willed she was, yet indefatigable and unsparing in her demands upon herself as well as upon others. Her energy was inexhaustible. After a night of passionate gambling (for all her sanctimoniousness, she was a lover of cards), she would don a mask and visit the Mehlgrube where she would spend the early morning hours dancing. Then, without having slept, she would proceed to her routine tasks, resting only a few hours in the afternoon.

For the newer ideas which were streaming across Europe from England and France—political, social and religious—and which were filling some with hope and admiration and others with dread, she had little tolerance. She belonged to the generation of absolute monarchs. Though Frederick the Great might listen to Voltaire, she would have none of the newfangled philosophy around her. She was prim and intolerant, and her religious zeal was unbounded. Her censorship was so rigid that even Prince Gallitzin was prevented from receiving the writings of Voltaire. When the Prince complained, her Majesty reproved him unceremoniously: "Prince Gallitzin should be ashamed to desire such

books, which do him little credit before genteel society." She thought Voltaire and Montesquieu "detestable." She hated Freemasons and Protestants, but she hated Jews even more bitterly. She was tireless in her efforts to effect conversions, and failing of these, in her persecutions. For her there was only one religion—as there was only one monarch and one state.

Unlike her Habsburg predecessors, Maria Theresa was no great lover of the theater or of music. It was good taste to encourage the arts, and she did her share as a concession to prevailing royal fashion and the weakness of her courtiers. The latter she had occasion to reprove more than once. Count Wenzeslaus Anton von Kaunitz—her most trusted councilor, ambassador to the court of Paris, later imperial chancellor—was given to understand that his passion for the theater was dangerous and dishonorable. "Your name," she said, "is too respectable and dear to be associated with the basest portion of my kingdom."

Her repugnance for the popular theater knew no bounds. Again and again she directed her warnings against it, demanding greater modesty of gesture and expression, greater sobriety and respect. In 1752 she completely forbade the performances of plays in the German vernacular, specifically singling out those of the celebrated and popular buffoon Bernardon—Joseph von Kurz—and recommending for presentation only plays translated from the French, Italian or Spanish. Yet it was this, the "German" theater as it was called, that proved profitable, while her more cherished enterprises at the Burgtheater—her French theater—added loss to loss, becoming more and more burdened with debt and ruining more than one entrepreneur. It was the "German" theater that survived in spite of her.

## 4

TWELVE years had brought change to the musical life of the city as well. Caldara and Fux were dead. Christoph Wagenseil, a pupil of old Fux, was now court composer, and Georg Reutter was the new *Kapellmeister* at St. Stephen's. But the orbit of musical activity had remained the same. Wealthy princes and counts, who could afford the luxury of a private orchestra, opera company, and a *Kapellmeister* to write and direct the music in their palaces, dictated the musical taste of Vienna. There were no public orchestras in Vienna such as were then beginning to make their appearance in Leipzig or Paris. For the middle classes there was the music of the streets or of the church; or, if they could muster the price, at the imperial theater.

In March of 1741 a new opera house was opened. Count Joseph Karl Sellier, "*entrepreneur* of the court operas, serenades, comedy, oratorios" and (of all things!) "sacred graves," in an ill-fated moment had obtained from her Majesty a patent. It permitted him to transform a barnlike, elongated structure next to the imperial palace on the Michaelerplatz into the "Royal Theater next to the palace," the Burgtheater. Her Majesty, much displeased with the carryings-on in the popular Kärntner-theater, saw in this request an opportunity to reform the taste of the town and to set an example of decorum and propriety. Perhaps she could wean her subjects from the too-avid attendance at the unspeakable German theater! As Vienna was without national feeling, so her theater was to be without a national drama.

French, Italian, Spanish plays were to be performed—everything but German drama.

Her Majesty paid her first visit to the Burgtheater in the following year and witnessed a performance of an Italian opera, *Amleto*, by Carcano. A year later the theater was remodeled, enlarged and redecorated. But the deficits kept mounting. Again and again the Empress was implored to extend a helping hand—for performances were expensive, foreign actors, singers, musicians and artists had to be paid well, and attendance was none too good. Viennese still kept flocking to the other theater.

In 1747 Count Sellier gave up in despair, and was succeeded by Rochus Baron Lopresti. Lopresti raised a loan of 40,000 florins from members of the court, and the theater was now beholden not only to the Empress and to its audience, but also to its multitudinous creditors.

## 5

THE Burgtheater opened anew on May 14, 1748. The opera was *Semiramide riconosciuta* with text—inevitably—by Metastasio. But the music was by a composer then unknown to Vienna, who had just returned from travels in Italy, France and England—Christoph Willibald Gluck.

The Empress was pleased with the new opera, though it is hard to believe that she or any of the other spectators clearly remembered what had taken place on the stage. For the eternal theme of Semiramis of Babylon was here again, with all the Oriental trappings, but complicated with plot and counterplot. Into this maze of incident Gluck wove his music. He sang in the strains he had

learned in Italy. All was skillful, compact, well constructed and technically correct. Yet one air broke through the trammels of his intractable material, and revealed the true master: the aria of Semiramis when she discovered the true story of her lover, *Tradita sprezzata*—"Betrayed and scorned." For this lone moment feeling triumphed, and the play became drama.

Here the master emerged for the first time.

In spite of the success of *Semiramide riconosciuta*, Gluck's victory was still far off. For one, the father of Marianne Pergin, whom he was now wooing, was adamant against musicians. Despite Marianne's solicitations and the growing fame of the young composer, Pergin—a respectable and well-established merchant—remained inflexible. Even at court Gluck was scarcely more secure. Gracious gifts from time to time did not ensure one's livelihood. And the favor of the court was fickle: With the memory of *Semiramide* still fresh, the aristocracy of Vienna transferred its plaudits to another composer—the celebrated Niccolò Jommelli of Italy, who had come to Vienna to attend the first performance of his *Didone*.

And so, Gluck was off again—to Hamburg, Copenhagen, Prague, wherever his fame made him welcome. In 1750 old Pergin died. The tide had turned. He returned to Vienna and married Marianne, assured of her devotion which was to last until her death thirty-seven years later.

THE Michaelerhaus on the Kohlmarkt was a large, unprepossessing building which epitomized a good deal of

Viennese life and society during the eighteenth century. The lower floors were occupied by persons of means and title. Here lived, on the first floor, the mother of Prince Esterházy; and on the third, Pietro Metastasio, imperial court poet. Indigence and poverty had to clamber up higher to hide in miserable garrets—mean and unheated—from which they could look down on the beautiful city and feed hungrily on a sight of the adjoining palace, the Burgtheater, and in a more reverential mood, of the Michaelerkirche.

Gluck visited the Michaelerhaus frequently, but he never climbed more than three flights. Had he gone beyond them—to one of the garrets on the fifth floor—he might have met a musician, a tall, swarthy youth who had aroused the interest of Metastasio. The irrepressible ambition, the unquestionable talent, and the poverty of the youth had touched the poet.

Joseph Haydn had not always been a child of misery. The son of a poor wagoner of Rohrau, in Lower Austria, and of a cook to the noble family of Count Harrach, young Franz Joseph Haydn had been discovered by the formidable Georg Reutter who, on the lookout for fresh young voices for his Sängerschule, had induced the parents of Franz Joseph to entrust him to his care. This was a piece of good fortune which they viewed with joy. The singing boys of Vienna were the special care and pride of the city, which housed, fed and taught them. Joseph would live in the vicinity of the great cathedral. Perhaps he would be fortunate enough to win the favor of royalty . . .

The life of a *Sängerknabe* was not an easy one. Joseph studied the violin, the clavichord, singing. He participated in cathedral services, sacred processions, funeral

ceremonies; and frequently—occasions most to be looked forward to!—he was taken to the royal palaces at Schönbrunn and Laxenburg to perform before their Majesties.

Young Haydn did attract the attention of the Empress—much to his own distress. The story goes that, being something of a scrapegrace, he and his companions had climbed the perilous heights of a scaffold then surrounding the palace of Schönbrunn. The Empress called the attention of Reutter to the young daredevil perched on the heights, and advised a monitory caning.

Worse luck was soon to follow. In 1749 Joseph lost his voice. On a November day of that year he was turned loose into the streets of the city. Alone and penniless, he passed the raw night in the open. A chorister, Spangler by name, found him, and poor as he was took him home with him to his wretched rooms where he lived with his wife and child, and supported him for a time. Somehow Haydn survived the winter. The following spring, aided by a loan from another generous friend, he set up home in the Michaelerhaus. For years he lived here, on the bitter and uncertain bread of dependence—musician and lackey in one: doing hackwork, writing sonatas, cassations, nocturnes for whoever ordered them, playing the organ or the clavichord for a fee, and eking out this misery with the drudgery of teaching.

One of his cassations, or street-serenades, performed in the open, pleased Harlequin Joseph von Kurz—Bernardon—who, on the lookout for inexpensive talent, inquired after the composer. Bernardon took a liking to the boy and ordered a setting for one of his farces. *Der neue krumme Teufel* was never destined to be performed, since it aroused the displeasure of an “important” person.

But it opened for Haydn profitable avenues formerly closed and brought him to the notice of some influential patrons.

Metastasio liked the young man. He sent him pupils and recommended him to the ancient master of Italian song, Niccolò Porpora, for further instruction. Countess Thun, too, struck by one of his sonatas, engaged him as her music teacher. The doors of aristocratic houses suddenly opened to him. One after another the princely patrons befriended him. First, Karl Joseph von Fürnberg, himself a musician, invited him to Mannersdorf; then, the Bohemian Count Morzin, in 1759, appointed him musical director and conductor at his palace.

Haydn's life—like his temperament—was well ordered and uneventful. Except for one fatal misstep. The elder daughter of a hairdresser, Maria Anna Keller, became his wife when her younger sister—whom Haydn was wooing—took the veil. Maria Anna was surly, ill-tempered, stupid and selfish. "It was the same to her," Haydn later said, "whether her husband was a cobbler or an artist." All his life—while success was piling on success, and his fame seemed to be bounded only by Europe's extent—she stood in the background, a grim reminder of an early mistake.

For Fürnberg, Haydn composed his first string quartet; for Morzin, his first symphony. And now Franz Esterházy sought him out, offering him the post of *Vice-Kapellmeister*. In 1761, Haydn left for Esterházy's estate at Eisenstadt. The terms of the agreement stipulated that the *Kapellmeister* "must be temperate, not showing himself overbearing towards his musicians, but mild and lenient, straightforward and composed." And to remind him of his place in the household, he was ordered to

appear in uniform along with his men—in white stockings, white linen, powdered, and with either pigtail or tie-wig. He was warned against familiarity, vulgarity in eating, drinking or conversation. In other words, he was to behave no worse than one of his Serene Highness's footmen.

Fateful year! In Eisenstadt, Haydn was to lay the foundation for the German symphony and string quartet. In Vienna, at the same time, Gluck was about to create the first great music-drama.

## 7

AFTER his marriage with Marianne, Gluck marched from success to success in Vienna—making many friends and enemies. "He has surprising fire," Metastasio confessed to a friend, "but he is somewhat mad." And, more bitterly: Gluck's music is full of "noise and extravagance." Madness, noise, extravagance. So does the dying age greet the birth of greatness! Perhaps there had been bitter words between them. Perhaps the older man had been aroused by the driving force of the musician, who strode ahead pitilessly, demanding so much of himself and so much of others who worked with him. Already not a few were complaining that his orchestral writing covered and obscured the text and distracted attention from the singing of the virtuoso; that his accompaniments were too dramatic, too loud.

But the farsighted at court saw him for what he was, despite gossip and cabal. Among these was the Prince of Sachsen-Hildburghausen, Metastasio's friend. Among these—and more prophetic in his faith—was Count Giacomo Durazzo.

Durazzo had come to Vienna as an ambassador of Genoa and, having won the friendship of Kaunitz, soon found his way into the good graces of her Majesty. He was then thirty years old, of gifted presence, something of an author, and passionate in his love of music and the theater. A fortunate and highly successful marriage to one of Vienna's aristocratic beauties assured him a fit place in Vienna's social life, so that, in 1752, when Count Franz Esterházy was chosen as supreme director of Vienna's theaters, Durazzo was appointed his assistant. Two years later, upon Esterházy's retirement, he succeeded him in his important post and at once proceeded to carry out theatrical reforms of which he had long been dreaming. His literary sympathies were profoundly French, and he aspired to replace the Italian tradition in drama and opera with that of France. The French theater had always been dear to the heart of the Empress, though thus far it had proved financially very unsuccessful. Perhaps Durazzo would succeed where others had failed.

A royal decree of 1752 completely separated the two theaters: the Kärntnertor and the Burgtheater. The former was to present no plays other than those translated from the French, Italian or Spanish. "All domestic compositions of 'Bernardon' and the others are to be prohibited; should there be a few good ones by Weiskern, they should be carefully read and no equivocal expressions or impure words allowed; and the comedians are to be forbidden to use these under penalties. . . ." The Burgtheater was to be devoted entirely to French and Italian drama. And it was in the Burgtheater that Durazzo hoped to realize his reforms.

Durazzo did not have far to search for the musician most likely to sympathize with his aims. Gluck was at

hand—fresh, vigorous and successful. The Empress had already favored him more than once, and in 1754 she recommended him to Durazzo for appointment as chief of the orchestra at an annual stipend of 2,000 gulden. At last Gluck was established. The work was hard: composing music to Italian and French texts; supervising the work of the orchestra. His demands were severe and often provoked rebellion. At the court there was the opposition of Kapellmeister Georg Reutter who saw his place made more and more uncomfortable by his younger and more gifted rival.

An undeclared war was on: Durazzo and Gluck against Reutter and Metastasio. The battle waited only the arrival of one more ally.

In 1761 Ranieri de'Calsabigi—adventurer, man of the world and, in Casanova's words, "versed in financial operations, familiar with the commerce of nations, learned in history; bel-esprit, poet, and lover of women"—came to Vienna at the invitation of Kaunitz, as chamber councilor to the exchequer.

Forty-seven years old, unprepossessing in appearance, but ready of wit and tongue, he had wandered up and down Europe, crowding enough adventure into these years to serve two life spans. In Paris he had won the favor of the Duke of Bernis through his proposal of a state lottery—and it was in this connection that that other prince of adventurers and unexcelled judge of mankind, Casanova, met him. Expelled from France—perhaps in consequence of some shady transaction—Calsabigi made his way to Vienna.

Even in the course of his adventurous career he had succeeded in establishing a reputation as a man of letters. He wrote poems, edited the works of Metastasio, engaged

in literary controversy in Paris, and composed a learned dissertation on ancient sculpture.

The intellectual revolution which was sweeping over Europe in the sixties of the century, transforming literature, art and society, spoke in the name of emotion, of the heart, of simplicity, of humanity. This revolution was but a portion of that historic change which, beginning in England in the eighteenth century, was to march across the Channel, and then across the Atlantic, pronouncing the doom of absolutism. The spokesmen of the change were many—Rousseau, Diderot, Lessing and Voltaire. With these belonged Calsabigi and Gluck.

Both Calsabigi and Gluck had independently been groping in new directions. But the moment of their meeting was, in fact, the moment of their complete fulfillment. It may be forgiven the lesser of these men that writing many years later, perhaps in petulance or with a sense of his own inferiority, he tended to minimize the role of Gluck in the reformation: "I arrived in Vienna in 1761 filled with these ideas. One year later, Count Durazzo, then director of the theatres of the Imperial Court, and today its ambassador to Venice, to whom I read my *Orfeo*, contracted me to have it performed at the Theater. I accepted on the condition that the music be composed to suit my taste. He sent me to Monsieur Gluck who, he added, was ready to put himself at my disposal." (As if he had not already collaborated with Gluck in the preparation of a ballet, *Don Juan*!) Calsabigi continues in the same vein: Gluck, he states, was not then accounted among the great composers of the day; Calsabigi proceeded to instruct him in the preparation of the score. He indicated all the nuances, the tempi, and begged the composer to "banish the long runs, the

cadenzas, and the *ritornelli* and all that was Gothic, barbarous and extravagant. M. Gluck readily entered into my views."

Forgivable vanity! Gluck was already a celebrated composer at court. In conversations with Calsabigi he no doubt added his words of comment and advice with the voice of an equal. Gluck recognized what he himself had been striving for when Calsabigi spoke of music and poetry as fused declamation, of the need of a poetic text which was strong, filled with emotion, touching and harmonious, made more significant by a musical score that was true to the words and was natural in its emphasis. Others had spoken in the same vein before; but no other poet had as yet found a composer to fulfill this demand. An end to the ingenious flowers of speech, the amorous discourses, the lovelorn affectations of Metastasio's dramas! An end to the regal emptiness of highborn characters, and to the intricate web of meaningless action!

And so *Orfeo ed Euridice* was conceived and nurtured. Already in July of 1762 the contemporary Zinzendorf records that he was present at Calsabigi's on the Kohlmarkt where a distinguished company consisting of the Duke of Braganza, Durazzo and others heard the celebrated *castrato*, Guadagni, sing portions of *Orfeo*, with Gluck himself taking the part of the Furies. Rehearsals at the Burgtheater began, and with that inflexibility which characterized him throughout, Gluck implored, threatened, grew violent—until he secured from the musicians the effects he desired. His severity drove the orchestra and singers to rebellion, and frequently the Emperor was called upon to restore calm. "You know what he's like, my children. At bottom, though, he is a good man."

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It is the evening of October 5, 1762. . . . The theater adjoining the royal palace is filled to the doors. The throb of expectancy enlivens the dim interior of the somewhat bare building. In the flickering candlelight, the audience looks expectantly to the right and to the left for glimpses of celebrity. In one of the boxes is the Duke of Braganza, in gala dress and wig; in another, the Prince and Princess Esterházy. Prince Kaunitz is here, too—supporting his sharp-featured and inscrutable face on bejeweled fingers. In the box on the right, closest to the stage, is Count Giacomo Durazzo, to whom this evening is the fulfillment of many years of dreams.

In the orchestra pit the musicians fussily tune their instruments. One of them, seated at the harpsichord, turns his head slightly toward the audience, and smiles a greeting to an acquaintance. It is Ritter von Gluck, the composer of the opera to be presented tonight.

An awed hush. The audience is brought to its feet. All eyes turn in the direction of the royal box in which now appear the Empress and her consort.

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Not the years alone have wrought great change in the appearance of Maria Theresa. She has grown much stouter; the handsome quality of her face is gone. But the eyes are as bright and as keen as ever. Yet in her whole demeanor there is something of weariness. She has come to the theater for a few hours' forgetfulness. As she looks around her she is pleased by the devotion of her subjects.

They have indeed supported her nobly. Yet they, too, are wearying of the years of warfare which seem to be coming to an inglorious end. For six years, the armies of Austria and those of Prussia have been battling back and forth. Victories and defeats have alternated. Now Maria Theresa's generals, after glorious campaigns, are being driven back. An irresistible tide seems to have overwhelmed her. Only a short time before, three thousand Austrians were left on the battlefields of Freiburg, and four thousand were taken captive. Now her allies, too, are deserting her. Russia and France have already made their peace with the indomitable "Attila of the North"—and Austria's turn is next. Again, as at the beginning of her reign, Maria Theresa stands alone. She knows that the eyes of her subjects turned toward her with devotion are also asking for peace. Thousands of Austrians dead, a treasury burden of over 130 million gulden, and Silesia lost forever!

"The outlook is so dark," the Empress muses as she seats herself in the imperial box, "that we must either have immediate peace, or none at all."

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She nods graciously toward the man at the clavichord. Ritter von Gluck raises an imperious hand, and the orchestra breaks into the impulsive opening bars of *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

Outside on the battlefield the armies of Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa may be locked in fateful warfare. Here in the theater close to the royal palace another kind of history is being made. As the curtain parts, Maria Theresa dismisses the problems that are pressing on her mind, the faces of the councilors relax, the

audience leans forward. The chorus on the stage begins its poignant chant over the grave of Eurydice. Sitting there in the flickering candlelight, powdered and gallant, are these men and women for a moment aware that the new Orpheus who has now arisen, and who sits so unpretentiously at the harpsichord, is destined to outlive both Habsburg and Hohenzollern?

The *castrato*, Guadagni, is in excellent voice tonight. Thirty-seven years old, he is now at the height of his powers. His rich and warm voice (like that of a woman) has interrupted the opening choral chant with only one pathetically sung word: "Eurydice!" Orpheus wishes the funeral ceremonies over, so that he may be alone with his sorrow. Bitterly he berates the gods for having bereft him of the woman he loves. Touched by his grief, Jove relents, and the God Amor brings him the happy tidings that he is now permitted to enter the lower regions—but on one condition only: He must not look upon his wife until both of them have reached the upper air.

Orpheus descends to the nether world, into the horrible half-darkness where the Furies and the Specters whirl around in their corybantic dances. Suddenly, the sound of a lyre . . . "What mortal, following in the footsteps of Heracles and Piröotus, has penetrated the darkness of Erebus and set foot here?" they shriek. Again they resume their frenzied dancing. In the orchestra is heard the violent howling of Cerberus. "Unafraid of the yelps of Cerberus, who is this, if he be no god?" Orpheus strikes his lyre. In a plaintive chant he sings: "Have pity, Furies." But they break in upon him with a horrible, "No!" "Specters," he continues—(again their blood-curdling, "No!")—"let my heart-rending grief make you more tender!" Again, "No!" But they cannot long resist

the magic of his lyre, or the heartbreaking beauty of his plea. "Miserable youth"—they are softened and contrite—"miserable youth, what do you wish? There is nothing here but strife and crying." "I am not afraid," Orpheus sings, "I carry within me my own hell." Something incomprehensible has come over the Furies. "What unknown stirring has appeased our implacable rage?" they ask. The gates creak on their blackened hinges and Orpheus passes with the footsteps of a hero, a conqueror, into Elysium. The struggle is over. Suddenly all is changed. Out of darkness into light, out of the turmoil of Hades into the pure serenity of Elysium. The dance of the Furies is succeeded by the dance of the Good Spirits; the violent throbbing of the orchestra and the terrifying warnings of the brasses give way to the beautiful softness of the flute. The air in Elysium is clear and bright, and the change blinds him. Here is where Eurydice dwells.

And so, Orpheus regains Eurydice. But not for long. Ignorant of the divine decree, Eurydice is unable to understand why he refuses to look at her. Finally Orpheus breaks down and turns his face toward his beloved. At his gaze, Eurydice expires again. Heartbroken, Orpheus asks: "What shall I do without my Eurydice?" But the God of Love intervenes again and restores Eurydice to him. The chorus chants joyously: "The torment of two hearts has the God of Love turned to heavenly joy!"

The curtain falls. Guadagni, unknowingly perhaps, has sung his greatest part. No *fioriture*, no long and meretricious runs, no special arias in which he can exhibit his marvelous virtuosity. Only drama, feeling, direct emotion without embroidery. The words suited to the play, and the music suited to the words, underscore the

emotions, emphasizing them, giving them another kind of life. The fateful "No" of the Furies has filled the audience with dread; the pitiful plaint of Orpheus, with its appealing magnificence, has touched them.

But only a few in the audience must have recognized in this opera the dawning of a new musical day. The others were without doubt puzzled. The plot was simple and almost devoid of action, and the play seemed to have the static quality of a frieze. There were only three characters, and a chorus acting as the fourth. And the music: those recitatives accompanied by the orchestra, now become fundamental portions of the opera; those piercing cacophonies underlining the meaning of the words, engraving them, so to speak! No, this was no ornamental opera of the Metastasio variety; this was music and drama in one. The Viennese—accustomed to the strains of Italian opera—were not ready for it. For them, the reign of Metastasio had not ended that night.

## 9

THE Hungarian Count Palffy had brought back from Linz news of a miracle he had witnessed there. It concerned a boy of six, born in Salzburg, whose performances at the clavichord—so Palffy said—dwarfed the achievement of many mature musicians. Archduke Leopold was ready to support the story, for he had heard the boy perform in Munich. And now the child had come to Vienna with his father and sister. Since the court was eager to witness the miraculous, Maria Theresa commanded the entire family to appear at her palace in Schönbrunn.

The imperial palace at Schönbrunn—not far from Vienna—is a Habsburg dream brought to realization. It is another Versailles, but more beautiful—for Versailles is built on sandy ground while Schönbrunn is framed by mountains and woods. Back of it stretch the gardens in ascending terraces, interrupted at one point by the Neptune fountain, and topped by the lovely colonnade, the Glorietta. But its rather symmetrical exterior scarcely suggests the dazzling wealth and beauty within.

Even without the fountain and the Glorietta—for these were built in the seventies—the first sight of Schönbrunn must have appeared wonderful to the little boy reared in the medieval splendor of Salzburg. He was led through the vast ceremonial hall, with its vaulted ceiling and its frescoes, and its delicately tinted walls of white and gold. Perhaps he was granted a view of the most fabulous rooms of the palace—the Millionenzimmer, that perfect gem of Austrian rococo; or the Chinese room with the delicate tracery on the walls and its dainty Oriental furniture.

Against this rococo background, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart performed before their Majesties, on the twelfth of October, 1762. Dressed in a silk doublet, a tight-fitting velvet jacket with puffed sleeves, his hair carefully groomed, he sat at the harpsichord in Schönbrunn and played. His legs were too short to reach the pedals, and his hands too small to encompass octaves. He played a concerto by Christoph Wagenseil, and Wagenseil himself—who, at the child's request, turned the pages of the music—could scarcely contain his tears. Then, at a venture, the miracle boy performed his tricks: played with one finger, played with the keyboard covered, improvised at will and without end—while the court

gasped. "You are a little sorcerer," said the Emperor. And out of his magic horn of plenty the little sorcerer poured forth music such as had never been heard before.

The Emperor and Empress showered him with gifts. The nobility vied in their patronage of him—particularly Kaunitz and Kinsky.

Then, suddenly, the wonder child was stricken with scarlet fever. Hurriedly, he was taken from Vienna by his father back to his native Salzburg.

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## IO

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DURAZZO was gone. The cabals at court had proved too strong for him, abetted as they were by the archenemy, Metastasio, and a number of Frenchmen whom Durazzo himself had drawn to the court. It may have been that Maria Theresa had grown tired of him, of his incessant clamor for money, and even of his experiments with French art. Whatever the reason—Durazzo was dismissed, and given the post of ambassador to Venice as balm. His place in the theater was filled by Count Sporck. But the doom of the French theater was already sealed: When Emperor Francis died the following year, both theaters were closed in mourning. The French company was disbanded, while the German actors were put on half pay.

Gluck now stood on his own feet. He and Calsabigi were planning a worthy successor to *Orfeo—Alceste*. He would, he *must* make Vienna understand what he was trying to say. Would they know what he meant when he told them that he wished to forget that he was a musician?

That he wished to absorb the poem as a work of art, fuse it with his music? Could they understand what arduous work it was for him to sit in the theater, watch the performance of a play, study the characters, so that he might know every word and every mood, before he had set down a single bar of music on paper? What pain the preparation of *Alceste* cost him: a year of study, followed by exhaustion and illness.

I endeavored to restrict music to its proper function, that of seconding the poetry by enforcing the expression of the sentiment and the interest of the situations without interrupting the action or weakening it by superfluous ornament. . . . I have been very careful never to interrupt a singer in the heat of dialogue in order to introduce a tedious *ritornelle*, nor to stop him in the middle of a word for the purpose of displaying the flexibility of his voice on some favorable vowel. . . . I have also thought that my chief endeavor should be to attain a grand simplicity, and consequently I have avoided making a parade of difficulties at the cost of clearness; I have set no value on novelty as such, unless it was naturally suggested by the situation and suited to the expression. In short, there was no rule which I did not consider myself bound to sacrifice for the sake of effect.

Like its great predecessor, *Alceste* was to be a hymn to the triumphant victory of love over death. From the first descending chords of the orchestra—sounding the implacable voice of Fate—the audience must have sensed the creation of a new world of sound. No empty overture this (for even *Orfeo* had had an “overture” totally unrelated to the body of the opera), but an intrada—an introduction—announcing the theme of the work, integrally bound up with the character and mood of the opera itself. Small wonder that, many years later, Richard Wagner spoke with humility of this work of Gluck’s. For from *Alceste* the road leads straight to *Tristan und Isolde*.

## II

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART was present at one of the first performances of *Alceste*—"the melancholy *Alceste*," he described it disparagingly. Eleven years old now, he was a far greater pianist than he had been when he had come to Vienna five years before. Unfortunately, he was no longer the miracle child. Blasé Viennese society was no longer astonished at his feats.

From his rooms on the Hohe Brücke 389, Mozart's father, Herr Leopold, looked out upon a city which had once promised his son so much, but whose present indifference and callousness embittered him. The much-coveted appearance at court and at the palaces had not taken place. Instead of the munificent gifts he had anticipated for the boy, Wolfgang had received a medal! Only the Russian prince, Gallitzin, had invited Wolfgang to his palace. As for the other notables who had five years before fallen over themselves in an effort to draw him to their homes, now they completely ignored him.

What ill fortune was pursuing them? Herr Leopold asked himself. Wherever they had come—to France, England, Holland and Germany—there had been jubilation and rewards. A delirious succession of journeys. Performances before the crowned heads of Europe. Praise from the King of England. The Queen of England herself gracious enough to ask Wolfgang to accompany her singing. Was the boy any less the miracle here? What of the ten clavier sonatas composed in London? Or the *Kyrie* for Paris? Or the cantata for Salzburg?

Savagely, he berated the city:

The . . . public as a whole has no love of anything serious or sensible. They cannot understand it, and their theaters furnish abundant proof that nothing but utter trash such as dances, burlesques, harlequinades, ghost tricks, and devil's antics will go down with them. You may see a fine gentleman, even with an order on his breast, laughing till the tears run down his face, and applauding with all his might some piece of senseless buffoonery; whilst in a most affecting scene, where the situation and action are alike irresistibly fine and pathetic, and where the dialogue is of the highest order, he will chatter so loudly with a lady, that his better-informed neighbors can scarcely hear a word of the play.

What apathy to culture! And what niggardliness at the court! Maria Theresa's son, Archduke Joseph, had transferred the court opera to the private hands of Affligio, and worried his head little about the state of music in his country. Maria Theresa was still in mourning and had withdrawn more than ever from the profaner pleasures of the court. As for the rest of the nobility, their fickle taste was as much gratified by an animal-baiting performance as by an incomparable sonata for harpsichord.

The Archduke's parsimony was not the only obstacle. Cabal and enmity reigned at the palace. Joseph had suggested to Affligio that an *opera buffa* composed by a boy of eleven might tickle the palate of the town. And so young Wolfgang Mozart had set to work, and with amazing speed had completed *La Finta semplice*. All seemed to go well—until suddenly Affligio changed his mind. The reason? The artists and composers of the opera house could not suffer the indignity of producing the work of a child. Their opposition had the support of Gluck himself, who could not muster enthusiasm for an opera built on traditional Italian models. Leopold stormed, threatened, pleaded. But the opera was not produced.

So Leopold, who had come to Vienna with soaring hopes, was forced to content himself with trifles—a per-

formance of Wolfgang's little opera, *Bastien und Bastienne*, at the home of the celebrated Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer; and—in the presence of the imperial court—a mass produced at the orphan asylum. Little enough consolation to take back with them to Salzburg!

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And to Gluck, too, it seemed that Vienna had grown more narrow and confining. He was very much alone now. Durazzo was gone. Calsabigi had suddenly left—under a cloud—and had gone back to Naples, of which he had been dreaming for many years. Their last work together, *Paride ed Elena*, had the year before proved a failure—galling assurance that the Viennese would never understand him. In revulsion Gluck set down his thoughts concerning his critics:

Only in the hope that I might find imitators did I decide to publish the music of *Alceste* and I flattered myself that the others would be eager to follow the road I had broken for them, in order to destroy the evil practices which have crept into the Italian opera and have dishonored it. I am now convinced that my hopes were in vain. The half-learned, the judges and legislators of art—a class of persons unfortunately too numerous, and at the same time of greater disadvantage to art than ignoramuses—rage against a method which, if established, would obviously endanger their criteria.

But he was not dismayed.

No obstacles will deter me from making new attempts to achieve my purposes. *Sufficit mihi unus Plato per cuncto populo*; I would rather have one Plato on my side, than all the populace.

An unhappy business venture at the Burgtheater and a disastrous loss of fortune merely increased his unrest. It was time to seek other fields. From Paris had come the urgent call of his own pupil Marie Antoinette, daughter of Maria Theresa. To Paris he would go. There, in the

theaters which had witnessed the works of Lully and Rameau, he might be welcome, too. A change of place—a change of fortune!

In 1773 he left Vienna for Paris. And thereafter the history of Gluck is the history of his works in Paris.

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## 12

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FRANCIS died in 1765. Maria Theresa was now alone. *Alone* save for her duties—and her increasing piety and intolerance. She dressed in black and mourned her husband for a long time—in truth, till the end of her own life—and she grew harder and sterner. Never too great a friend of the theater, she came to hate and revile it, and warned others away from it. To her son, Ferdinand, she wrote:

Do not occupy yourself with persons of the theater. You must not pronounce their names outside the theater. . . . If they act well, be generous to them; for the rest, their names, and even more, their anecdotes, should be ignored forever. . . . If you fill your head with these bagatelles, all serious reasoning will be expelled.

In her own house things were not going well. She had watched her son Joseph closely these last years and was not pleased with him. She disliked his self-will, his iron pride, his singleness of purpose, all covered by the mask of reticence, which was soon to become a disease. She wanted to dispose of and order his life as she had done with her other children, but the young colt reared and fretted.

Archduke Joseph admired Frederick the Great. He admired his strength, his genius, his enlightenment, and his statesmanship—admired them as keenly as his mother

hated them. He hated the Jesuits and wrote a treatise on the confiscation of Church property which his mother burned in anger. "To burn does not convince," he retorted ironically and bided his time. A stranger at court, he was at odds with Maria Theresa and her councilors (Kaunitz, in particular), and much more at odds with himself. His father, while he was alive, he had looked upon as an "idler surrounded by flatterers"—in envy, perhaps, of Francis' equable temperament and self-sufficiency. Sensitive and lonely, his marriage tragic, unsuccessful in finding a companion or a confidant, Joseph must have frequently given way to despair. "If I did not have a little philosophy to sustain me," he wrote, "I would go insane. . . ."

It was perhaps for these reasons that the contemplation of the career of Frederick the Great gave him courage. Frederick, too, stood alone. Why not he?

Like the object of his admiration, he pressed for reforms built on the principles of the Enlightenment. "Once grant freedom of belief, and there will be but one religion—that of directing all citizens equally towards the good state." He advocated the liberalization of taxation, which weighed so heavily on the poorer peasants, opened the Augarten and the Prater to the people, effected economies in government administration (almost to the point of parsimony) and brought about the centralization of authority which he hoped would wipe out all traces of feudalism.

Maria Theresa was growing older, but age did not make her less acquisitive or domineering. When Poland was being divided among the powers, she did not refuse her share—although not without some righteous words of reluctance. Frederick the Great and Catharine of Russia

understood her thoroughly. "She is always in tears," the former wrote, "yet she is always ready to take her share." And the Empress of Russia was even more ruthless: "As far as Lady Prayerful is concerned, I can say nothing more, than that she suffers from severe attacks of covetousness and imperiousness."

On the evening of November 29, 1780, Maria Theresa died. When he was apprised of the news, Prince Kaunitz was reported to have wept for the first time in his life. Forty years in the service of the Empress! And Joseph wrote to his brother Leopold:

I am alone in the world. Providence has wrested from me wives, children, father and mother. I pray sincerely to retain your friendship for me.

And in Potsdam, Frederick the Great mused: "Maria Theresa is no more. A new order of things begins."

The great disciple of the Enlightenment was not long in bringing the new order into being. The years which followed brought change upon change, reform and legislation in such bewildering rapidity as to startle all Europe. With an almost grim desperation, as if he were aware that he had not long to live, and as if he were impatient to see the birth of the new day, Joseph's revolutionary edicts followed each other. Reform of the administration, economy, abolition of capital punishment and penal reform, toleration for Jews, and finally—the most drastic of all—destruction of feudalism, darkness, obscurantism, medievalism. The many—the peasant and the merchant—he made happy and prosperous, and the country he brought out of medieval darkness into the light of modernity. A father to his people, he would hear their pleas, yet would force upon them the good things of life for their own sake—intransigent, unswerving in his purpose, unsparing of himself and others.

Joseph's was another futile attempt to save monarchical absolutism.

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THE operatic war which had begun in Vienna ended triumphantly in Paris. In the year of 1779 Gluck returned to Vienna never again to leave it, confident that his utterances of six years before had been fulfilled. The struggle upon which he could now look back with satisfaction had been bitter; the enmity and rivalry at Versailles had been no less active than at the Habsburg court. But he had powerful friends—chief among these, Marie Antoinette—and not least his own courage and certainty.

In Vienna he had fought Metastasio; in Paris it was Nicola Piccinni. Gluck had begun his Parisian career with a successful production of *Iphigénie en Aulide*, and had the following year been commissioned to set *Roland*, a libretto of Quinault, to music. But his enemies were at work too, and had prevailed upon Marie Antoinette to invite the Italian Piccinni to prepare the score for the very same text. In fury, Gluck destroyed his own version and dispatched a savage letter which was published in *L'Année littéraire*. This letter divided Paris into two camps: the old and the new; traditionalists and rebels. Marmontel found in Gluck's work "harsh and rugged harmony, incoherent modulations, and incongruities"; Jean Jacques Rousseau found in Gluck's operas a new artistic world of limitless scope.

Gluck's *Alceste* was performed, and proved a failure. Piccinni's *Roland*, on the other hand, was wildly acclaimed. Temporarily, at least, the victory belonged to

the Italian. The story goes that Gluck, behind the scenes at the opera house, had witnessed the reception accorded *Alceste*. Impetuously he rushed away, and meeting a friend in the street, he tearfully exclaimed: "My friend, *Alceste* has fallen!"

"Yes," his friend replied softly. "Fallen—from heaven!"

There was excitement enough in Paris in those days. A rivalry like this was profitable. Both sides filled the theater—the one to hiss, the other to applaud. But they paid the price of admission. The director of the Paris Opéra hit upon the idea of commissioning both Gluck and Piccinni to set to music the text of *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

Gluck's opera was produced first, on the eighteenth of March, 1778, and proved very successful. "I know not if what we have heard is melody," wrote Melchior Grimm after the performance. "Perhaps it is something much better. I forget the opera, and find myself in a Greek tragedy." Piccinni was abashed, and sought unsuccessfully to withdraw from the combat. His own opera was a dismal failure.

Complicated as the battle was by personal elements, by stupidity, commercialism, vindictiveness and even political partisanship, it strangely enough cleared the atmosphere. There was no longer any question of who had been left the victor on the field. Even many of Gluck's enemies were forced to confess that the old tradition must yield to the new.

And so Gluck returned to Vienna, to the peace for which he longed. To his little house in Perchtoldsdorf, on the outskirts of Vienna, came honor and recognition. The great ones of the earth came to his door, among them Grand Duke Peter of Russia. The old man, who had

fought stubbornly and courageously for his ideas, now witnessed their realization and acceptance. He met his admirers with his customary dignity and pride—the pride of a conqueror—and not a little sadness which came of old age and loneliness. Would that his adopted daughter, Marianne, were alive to witness his triumph! She had died while he was in Paris, and he had never recovered from the loss. Would, too, that he were in better health! “I am not well,” he complained to a friend in 1781, “the March weather upsets me, I suffer from melancholy.” And, somewhat later: “I have been ill for several months. . . . My head is enfeebled and my right arm is useless. . . . ”

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## 14

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ON his return to Vienna, Gluck found that many of his old friends and rivals were dead—Georg Reutter of St. Stephen's, Kapellmeister Christoph Wagenseil, and that composer of charming ballet music, Florian Gassmann. New composers had risen to high office while he had been in Paris, but none was more influential than the young Italian, Antonio Salieri. Salieri had come to Vienna in 1766 and, enjoying the protection of his teacher, Florian Gassmann, and that of the court poet, Metastasio, soon became director of the court opera. Not long thereafter, when he was only twenty-four, he was appointed court composer.

Shortly before his departure for Paris, Gluck had met Salieri at Calsabigi's, and after hearing some portions of the young composer's comic opera *Le Donne letterate* had

said to him, "You are destined for great things in Vienna."

Fortune continued to favor the young musician. *Le Donne letterate* proved to be one of the most successful operas at the Burgtheater. Following his appointment as court composer, Salieri became director of the Tonkünstler Societät, the first public orchestra in Vienna, which Gassmann had founded in 1771. Already there were few in the city whose word carried so much weight, and whose influence was so far-reaching as Salieri's.

Fétis has given us a vivid portrait of him:

Amiable, benevolent, gay : : . Salieri had many friends. Slight of figure, but well cut-out, he was always dressed with a certain studied elegance. He had a bronze complexion, his eyes were black and full of fire, his look expressive, and his gestures animated. Few people knew so many anecdotes as he, or could relate them in so engaging a manner. His speech was a droll mixture of Italian, German and French pronunciations and idioms. A great lover of delicacies, he could never pass a sweet-shop without stuffing his pockets with candies. Easy to arouse to anger, he was just as easily placated.

Amiable, benevolent and kind. When his teacher and protector, Florian Gassmann, died in 1774, he provided handsomely for the family and devoted his energy to training the two daughters for a career at the opera house. Frequently, he helped those who were in need; toward destitute musicians he was munificent.

Yet with all this benevolence was combined a strong capacity for envy. He had traveled far in Vienna, and was determined not to yield ground to anyone. To potential rivals he was always a formidable enemy—employing every means at his disposal in an effort to destroy them.

Such a rival Salieri soon found in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

SUDDENLY, early in 1781, while he was in Munich, Mozart was called to Vienna by his master, the Archbishop of Salzburg. Matters had not stood well between them for some time. Jerome, Count of Colloredo, Archbishop of Salzburg—a little pope in his own little Rome—was proud, overbearing and intolerant. Toward Mozart he behaved with the cold-blooded brutality of a feudal lord. For years Mozart had suffered insult, humiliation and torture. Whatever the outside world might shout concerning Mozart's genius, to the Archbishop he was still the little Salzburg scrub of talent, to be treated no better than a footman. He had grudgingly allowed him leaves of absence and the Mozarts had looked far and wide for more comfortable berths. But lack of better fortune compelled both father and son to remain in his service: Leopold as undermaster of the Prince's chapel, Wolfgang as court organist and composer at the archiepiscopal court, with the pitiful annual salary of 450 gulden. Wolfgang had once even been dismissed, but the humble intercession and pleas of his father had brought reinstatement. The time was not far off when there would be a complete break.

Wolfgang had more than once dreamed of freedom from this servitude. From Paris (where his mother had died in the same year) he wrote to his father:

The Archbishop cannot pay me enough for my slavery in Salzburg. I feel keen pleasure in anticipating a visit to you, and nothing but irritation and anxiety when I think of returning to that beggarly court. The Archbishop had better not begin toying with me. You know it is not inconceivable that I may thumb my nose at him.

And again:

I swear to you that I cannot suffer either Salzburg or its inhabitants. . . . Should I be offered a salary of 2,000 gulden by the Archbishop of Salzburg and a mere 1,000 gulden by someone else, I would take the second offer; for in place of the 1,000 gulden I should have health and peace of mind. . . . I am no lackey, no menial!

His father's unsparing pen lashed him mercilessly in an effort to sway him from what seemed to the servile musician a foolhardy act. And as he felt his influence lessen, Leopold became more and more abusive. He could not understand that his son had grown up—and that he was struggling for artistic freedom.

The break with the Archbishop came, finally, in Vienna in 1781. Mozart's letter to his father tells the full story:

I am still seething with bitter resentment which you, my best and dearest friend, will no doubt share, for my patience, long tried, has at last given out! I am no longer so unfortunate as to be in Salzburg service. Today was a happy day for me! Listen!

Twice already, this—I do not know what to call him!—has given me violent abuse and impertinence to my face, insults which, to spare you, I did not tell you of, and which I should have revenged on the spot if I had not had you, my dearest father, before my eyes. He called me knave and a slovenly rascal, told me to take myself off, and I—enduring it all—felt that not only my honor but yours too was involved, and yet held my peace, for such was your wish. But now listen!

A week ago, a footman appeared unexpectedly and told me I must be gone that instant. The others had all been warned of the day, but not I. So I threw everything into my trunks with all speed, and Mme. Weber was good enough to open her doors to me. . . . I arranged to leave by the diligence on Wednesday (that is, today, the 9th), but as I could not collect the money still due to me within that time, I postponed my journey till Saturday. When I presented myself this morning, the valet told me the Archbishop wished to place a packet in my charge to be carried with me. I asked if it were urgent. They told me, "Yes, it is of the greatest importance." "Then," said I, "I am very sorry I cannot have the privilege of serving his Grace, for (on account of aforementioned reasons) I do not leave before

Saturday. I am not in the household, I live at my own expenses, and consequently, as is natural, I cannot travel till I have funds to enable me to do so—no one has the right to ask me to ruin myself."

As I came into his presence, his first words were: "Well, when are you going, fellow?" "I had intended going tonight but all the places are taken." Then he began, without a pause for breath: I was the most slovenly fellow he knew; no one served him so ill as I; I had better leave today or he would write home and have my salary stopped. It was impossible to get a word in edgeways, for he raged on like a conflagration. I listened to it all passively. He lied to my face that my salary was 500 gulden, called me a scoundrel, a lousy rascal, a vagabond—oh, I cannot write it all down! At length my blood was boiling. I could no longer keep silence, and said: "Then is your Grace dissatisfied with me?" "What! you would threaten me, would you? On, you idiot! There is the door! I will have no more to do with a wretch, do you hear?" At last I got a word in, "Nor I with you!" "Well, go!" And I, in going, said: "This is final. Tomorrow you shall have my resignation in writing."

Tell me now, dearest father, did I not say the word too late rather than too soon? For my honor, as you know, is above everything precious to me, and I know that it is so to you also!

Now that he was freed of slavery to the Archbishop, Mozart mused, perhaps Joseph II would prove gracious and offer him a post at court. All Vienna was talking of the vulgar behavior of the Archbishop toward one of the great musicians of the time. Mozart waited impatiently. In addition to his own future, he now had to safeguard that of Constance Weber.

He had met the family of Fridolin Weber—a poor copyist and the father of four daughters—some years back in Mannheim. He had then fallen in love with Aloysia Weber, who had toyed with him for a while. The family was now living in Vienna. The father was dead; Aloysia was the first soprano of the court opera and married to the actor, Joseph Lange. Mozart took up quarters with the family. A young man living in a household in which were three unmarried women soon became the subject of scandalous gossip. Wolfgang's father

himself got wind of the disturbing news and hastened to reprove his son. Wolfgang replied:

The voice of nature speaks as strongly in me as in others; more strongly, perhaps, than in many a big, strong lout of a fellow. I cannot possibly live as do most young men in these days. In the first place, I have too much religion; in the second place, I have too great a love of my neighbor, and am too honorably minded to seduce an innocent maiden; while, in the third place, I have too much horror and disgust, too much fear and loathing of disease, and too much care for my health, to consort with whores. . . .

But who is the object of my love? Again, do not be horrified, I beg you! Not one of the Webers? Yes, one of the Webers! But not Josepha, not Sophia, but Constance, the middle one. In no other family have I ever met such differences of temperament. The oldest is a worthless, gross, perfidious person, not to be trusted. . . . The youngest is still too young to be anything but an amiable but feather-headed little creature. . . . But the middle one, my good, dear Constance, she it is who suffers from all this, and who, perhaps, for that very reason, is the best-hearted, the cleverest, in a word the best of them all. . . . She is not ugly, but one would not call her a beauty. Her whole beauty consists in two little black eyes and a graceful figure. She has no wit, but wholesome common sense enough to fulfill her duties as wife and mother. She is not inclined to extravagance. . . . On the contrary, she is used to being ill-dressed, for what little her mother was able to do for her children she did for the two others, and never for *her*. True, she would like to go neat and clean, but not *fine*. And most things that a woman needs she is able to make for herself. She dresses her own hair every day—understands housekeeping, has the kindest heart in the world, and—I love her, and she loves me with all her heart. Tell me whether I could wish myself a better wife?

He was determined to do as he pleased. There was no room for doubt or despair now. He would stand on his own feet. He *was* the greatest pianist of his age: Had he not recently proved this forcefully at the court of Joseph II when he had entered into a “musical duel,” so to speak, with the world-famous pianist, Muzio Clementi? He had composed more than three hundred works of music. The Emperor was beginning to recognize his merits, and had commissioned an opera. He was certain that *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* would be the turning point in his

fortunes. His father might storm, but he would marry Constance, and settle down to a more comfortable life. He *could* work, he *would* work—harder than any man alive. If only he could give up the drudgery that was forced on him!

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What was it that poisoned the air of Vienna? Envy and malice had for a long time threatened to embitter Gluck's life. Now they surrounded Mozart. He had thought that, once free from the infected air of Salzburg, he would breathe more freely. But here, too, he was pursued by bitter enmity. Antonio Salieri, who sensed in Mozart a dangerous rival, looked with dismay upon the promised production of *Die Entführung*. Ordinarily warmhearted and generous, in the presence of Mozart he was filled with dread for his own future. He pursued him with poisonous resentment and deadly heat—and, as is so often the case, found no dearth of allies. The cabal formed against the production of Mozart's opera devised all sorts of delays and embarrassments. Finally, the Emperor himself was forced to intervene.

*Die Entführung aus dem Serail* was produced on July 16, 1782, to a crowded house, a good portion of which had come to boo. Cabal or no cabal, the work triumphed. Kaunitz was enchanted; and the Emperor thought that the music was far too good for Viennese ears.

Mozart was excited. "The populace is quite crazy over this opera. It does one good to hear such applause. . . . The people will hear nothing else, and the theater is constantly filled to the doors."

Did they suspect that Mozart had here written his own marriage hymn? "*O wie ängstlich, wie feurig klopft mein*

*liebevolles Herz*," sings Belmont, the hero of the opera, as he thinks of *his* Constance. Mozart's heart, too, beat anxiously and fervently at the thought of his own love. He had poured into the music all his exhilaration, as if for the moment there were no anxieties, no conflicts, no irritations. He had—as he was to do again and again—transformed the dull text into a work gay, fanciful, exuberant, varied and alive. All was written in the high spirit of the *opera buffa*—the Viennese operetta of which it was the direct precursor. All leaped in joy, and though for moments there was pensiveness, even sadness, all ended on a note of mockery.

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Mozart and Constance Weber were married on August 4. The simple ceremony took place at the home of the Baroness von Waldstätten, who with characteristic open-handedness provided a princely supper for the guests.

And yet things did not go so well with Mozart as he had hoped. At every turn he found himself obstructed—now by Salieri, who preempted a coveted post as music master to some noblewoman, now by the niggardliness of the Emperor. His many admirers—Kaunitz, Countess Thun, Baron van Swieten—could effect little. The daily lessons were galling, and the income still uncertain. He was tired of cooling his heels in the anterooms of palaces. He would leave Vienna. He would go to Paris, to London. If the Emperor of Austria disdained his German musicians, other lands were happy enough to receive them. Gluck had gone to France; he would go there too. Kaunitz had told the Archduke that geniuses of the type of Mozart appeared only once in a century. Fretfully

Mozart regarded the good fortune of Salieri, who had the Emperor's heart and ear, and whose least work found a ready audience at the Burgtheater.

But a creative demon within him made him temporarily incapable of despair. And while he waited for his moment (which was never to come!), he lived and sang and wrote and danced, always affirming life, always creating new beauty.

Short, slight of build, Mozart was sensitively formed. His head was a trifle too large for the body, and its most attractive feature was the luxurious crop of hair, of which he was as vain as a woman. There was something soft and effeminate about his face, which was almost always pallid. Only one element of strength did that face possess: the intense, piercing eyes.

He loved the good things with a passion that was sometimes painful—fixing upon a red coat, upon a harlequin's costume for a masquerade, upon dancing, or a game of billiards, even upon a new pair of lace cuffs with the same kind of delirium which went into the shaping of his music. In all things he was the *Feinschmecker*, the *bon vivant*. But most of all he loved dancing, even more—Constance sometimes said—than music itself.

He loved people. With them he was gay, affable, alive, sometimes pensive, but never melancholy. Sunday mornings, his own house on the first floor of the Carminaschen Haus was filled with guests. Then there was gaiety, conversation and punch, which Mozart drank in great quantities. But always there was music, performed either by himself or by visiting musicians. Once, the seven-year-old Johann Hummel enchanted his hearers with feats of prodigy. And now and then, when he was on

leave from the palace of the Esterházy, the great Joseph Haydn would put in an appearance.

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ON his magnificent estate near Ödenburg, Prince Paul Anton Esterházy had built himself a baroque palace which vied in splendor and luxury with Versailles itself—so at least Prince Rohan had said on one occasion. Here Esterházy had surrounded himself with all that makes living good and exciting—art, music, the theater—and, being a man of good taste as well as fortune, he left nothing undone. Joseph Haydn saw to it that his orchestra was the best in the country. Here Haydn directed the concerts, wrote symphonies, quartets, sonatas and masses, and in his uniform waited on the pleasures of the master. Life at Eisenstadt was hard: there were hundreds of tasks; for while the Prince was an intelligent and gifted patron, he was not an easy taskmaster.

Already the fame of Haydn had spread far and wide—to London, Paris, Munich. But neither his surroundings nor words of praise had damaged that simplicity of soul, that directness and singleness which always characterized him. He was a simple man; but he was not naïve. There was the strain of a peasant in him, incorruptible and straight, which spoke out in him again and again. “I have associated,” Joseph Haydn said (and we may be sure not with boastfulness), “with kings and many great ones, and have received from their lips much flattery, but I have never wished to live on a level of intimacy with them, for I had rather hold to the people of my own station.”

For a man like that, the creative and the religious spirit were one—and he regarded his great works as the fulfillment of a prayer. “I rise early, and as soon as I am dressed, I fall on my knees and pray to God and the Holy Virgin that I may succeed again today.”

In his eyes, his genius was something which God had given him. He was going to prove himself worthy of the gift. In its own quiet way, his creative flame burned within him passionately, intensely and steadily, refining the precious gold in him.

Only two things in life he missed. One was love. That was to come later. The other was the life of the city. Busy as he was at Eisenstadt, with scarcely the time to think of the outside world, he longed to return to Vienna. Occasional visits merely whetted his appetite. The friends he knew lived there. The things he loved best were to be found there. Away from Vienna he felt an exile.

Now and then he broke the silence that was part of his nature, and in a letter (written much later) he gives us an intimation of his “loneliness”:

Here I sit in my desert—forsaken—a poor orphan—almost without human companionship—sad—and full of the noble days past and gone—alas! And who knows when these pleasant days will come again? The good company? Where one circle, one heart, one soul—those beautiful musical evenings which one can merely remember, but not describe?

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When one recalls the relations of Mozart and Haydn one is filled with a sense of exhilaration and cleanliness. In the poisoned atmosphere of the court—where envy and petty intrigue and even blindness ruled—the regard of one great man for the genius of another is heartening. Gluck was in his way friendly to Mozart and had expressed his admiration of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* to

him; but suspicion and distrust engendered in Mozart by his father and in Gluck by Salieri stood in the way of real intimacy. But between Haydn and Mozart there were no barriers. Haydn spoke to Mozart as a teacher who perceived the greater genius of his own pupil. He watched Mozart develop as one watches the growth of a flower, the matured perfection of which transcends the fondest dream and leaves one breathless. And Mozart, openhearted, passionately in search of understanding, turned to the older man, learned from him freely, and always acknowledged himself the debtor. The feuds of Metastasio and Gluck, of Gluck and Piccinni, the bitterness of Salieri toward Mozart—these may well be forgotten in the presence of this friendship.

Since 1764 Mozart had been studying Haydn's works. As the great master at Eisenstadt grew in assurance and skill, as his genius blossomed out, Mozart followed him with the reverence and admiration of a disciple. Haydn had upon the foundation laid by Philipp Emanuel Bach, Karl Stamitz and the Viennese Georg Matthias Monn built his symphonies and quartets—enriching them, unifying them, adding color and depth, poignancy and inexhaustible grace. The symphonies he wrote were fuller in orchestration, more consummate in the feeling for form, more imposing in their construction than anything that had preceded them. In the quartets he had brought to life each of the four voices, individualizing them, yet unifying them under a common will. . . . These things, Mozart watched, studied, understood—and absorbed.

Strange is this relationship, this mutual enrichment! Young Mozart learning from his master not only that perfection of form in which transparency, neatness and

clarity dominate. But stranger still is the sight of the older master learning from Mozart, and enlarged and deepened by the younger man, drawing close to him. After 1781 Haydn's symphonies, and after 1784 his quartets, reveal a richer strain. His music becomes less stylized, less formal, freer, more emotional, subtler and more dramatic.

It was at the Schulerstrasse 846—on the first floor—in February, 1785, that they met frequently. Leopold Mozart was there—having come to Vienna for a brief stay. How his pride must have been flattered by the presence of Haydn!

Here it was that Mozart deferentially placed before Haydn his newly composed quartets written in his honor. And then four musicians sat down to perform them for the first time. Haydn played first violin; the well-known composer and favorite of the Emperor, Kar von Dittersdorf, played the second violin; Mozart himself, the viola; while the gifted Wanhal performed on the violoncello.

Let Leopold Mozart tell the rest of the story:

Herr Haydn said to me: "I tell you before God and as an honest man—your son is the greatest composer I know, either personally or by name. He has taste, and apart from that the greatest knowledge of composition. . . ."

At the home of Baron von Wetzlar, early in 1785, Mozart met the singular Abbé da Ponte, recently appointed poet to the imperial theater. There was something satanic about da Ponte: His face was thin and pallid, his cheekbones sharp and high, and his nose beaked. Dressed with

foppish elegance, he almost invariably clasped a gold-knobbed cane behind his back. Some said that the man's character was shady; there was no doubt that his appearance was forbidding. But he had a sharp tongue and a quick wit which held his hearers spellbound.

He did not readily talk about himself. But rumor had it that he was a Venetian Jew, who soon became converted to the Catholic faith and then took holy orders. But he remained an adventurer at heart, whose checkered, dark and eventful career drove him from one city to another. Finally, bearing letters to Salieri from the poet Mazzola, he was fortunate enough to obtain a post at the court.

Though he was at this time at work on a libretto for Salieri, da Ponte proposed that he and Mozart collaborate. Mozart was skeptical. "When you can get the Emperor to interest himself in an opera of mine strongly enough to commission me, then I shall be happy to work with you." "It shall be my task to remove all difficulties," da Ponte answered.

Not long thereafter the composer Giovanni Paisiello arrived in Vienna. In his honor his masterpiece *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* was produced—a play of Beaumarchais which he had set to music. Mozart was present at the performance, and was fired by the text. Why not set the sequel—Beaumarchais's *Le Mariage de Figaro*—to music as well? Da Ponte agreed, especially since Baron Wetzlar stood ready to pay a price for the libretto. It remained only to obtain the approval of the Emperor.

But that was a ticklish business. The play had been forbidden at the Burgtheater. For Figaro—the "Barber of Seville"—had become a dangerous symbol, a symbol of the middle classes in revolt against autocracy. "*La*

*révolution déjà en action!*” Napoleon was to call *Figaro*. Joseph might be the enlightened monarch, but as the good father of his subjects he expected unquestioning submission, obedience and gratitude. Into Figaro’s mouth Beaumarchais had put the contempt of the solid middle classes for the corruption, tyranny, injustice and exploitation of aristocracy. We may be sure that Joseph II read with horror lines such as these:

FIGARO: I was born to be a courtier.

SUZANNE: They say that it is a very difficult calling.

FIGARO: Accept—take—ask. That is the secret in three words.

Or the following (Figaro is speaking):

Lost in the obscure crowd, I have had to use more science and calculation merely to get along, than was required to govern all of Spain for a hundred years.

Or this (Figaro again is speaking):

Provided that I do not speak in my writings concerning the authorities, nor of religion, nor of morality, nor of the people of high estate . . . nor of the opera, nor of the other performances, nor of a person who believes in anything, I may print anything freely after the inspection of two or three censors.

Joseph may have heard of the doings in Paris when *Le Mariage de Figaro* finally reached the stage in 1784 and proved so sensationally successful, that it was performed eighty-six successive times and scandalized and discomfited the court by its popularity.

No. The Emperor was opposed. Da Ponte and Mozart pleaded, offering to expunge questionable passages. Finally the Emperor yielded. Scene by scene, da Ponte rewrote the play; scene by scene, Mozart composed his music. “Everything was finished in six weeks.” Mozart hurried to the palace to play snatches of his score for the Emperor. His Majesty was delighted.

But if things went smoothly at court, there was trouble enough at the theater. It was Salieri once again, supported now by the poet Giovanni Casti, and the intendant of the court opera, Count Rosenberg. They plotted; they influenced musicians and singers. Salieri assured them that the music was unsingable and spurred them on to demand impossible alterations, which so enraged Mozart that he once threatened to withdraw his opera. But again the Emperor intervened. And the cast itself underwent a change of heart. By the time second rehearsal was called, the singers and musicians were beside themselves with enthusiasm for the opera.

After the second rehearsal, Michael Kelly wrote:

I can still see Mozart dressed in his red fur hat trimmed with gold, standing on the stage with the orchestra, beating time for the music. Benucci sang Figaro's *Non più andrai* with the greatest of enthusiasm and all the power of his voice. I stood beside Mozart who repeatedly cried: "Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!" in subdued tones. When Benucci came to that beautiful passage—*Cherubino alla vittoria!*—he allowed his magnificent voice to resound with all his might. The players on the stage and in the orchestra were electrified. Intoxicated with pleasure they cried again and again, and each time louder than the preceding one: "Bravo! Bravo! Maestro! Long live the great Mozart!" Those in the orchestra beat the music stands incessantly with the bows of their violins, thus expressing their enthusiasm. It seemed as if this storm of applause would never cease. The little man returned thanks for the homage paid him by bowing repeatedly. . . . Had Mozart written nothing but this piece of music, it alone would, in my humble opinion, have stamped him as the greatest master of his art. Never before was there a greater triumph than Mozart and his *Figaro!*

*Le Nozze di Figaro* was performed at the Burgtheater on May 1, 1786, with Mandini as the Count, Benucci as Figaro, Michael Kelly doubling as Basilio and Don Curzio, Nancy Storace as Suzanne and Mozart himself accompanying the recitatives at the harpsichord. "The theater was packed," Michael Kelly reported, and so many arias were repeated that the length of the opera was

very nearly doubled. The Emperor himself cried loudly: "Bravo!"

In November, Salieri prevailed upon the management of the Burgtheater to produce *Una Cosa rara*, a charming and catchy opera by Vicente Martin y Solar, a Spanish composer then in Vienna. In this way Salieri hoped to check Mozart's triumph. He succeeded. *Una Cosa rara* proved so attractive to the Viennese that they completely neglected *Figaro*. In December, after only nine performances, Mozart's opera was withdrawn from the Burgtheater.

What shall be said of *Figaro* that has not already been said? Need it be pointed out again how a moderately clever libretto (how inferior to the brilliant, biting original of Beaumarchais!) was transformed into drama; how stock characters were given personality; how an amorous intrigue was made into a thing of profound and touching grace; how Figaro and Suzanne—servants both—were made nobler far than their master? And this because of Mozart's music! What the text might have concealed, the music revealed. Figaro was still the living challenge to absolutism. The music capered, leaped, sighed, frowned, underlining each character and each emotion. Not a false note, not an unnecessary one. "Here," said Richard Wagner, "the dialogue becomes music and the music itself dialogue." Here was one continuous melody, beginning with the breath-taking overture and ending with the joyous chorus of reconciliation. Figaro and Suzanne have taught the unscrupulous Count a valuable lesson. Figaro and Suzanne are united in love. All will be peace.

Peace? For the characters of the play—perhaps. But not for the composer. The Viennese might acclaim

*Figaro*. The Emperor might cry "Bravo!"—but Mozart's anxieties were not at an end. The 450 gulden he had received had gone to pay a few of his many debts. He was penniless. Frequently now he was forced to turn to his friends for aid, and for lack of that, to offer his services to whoever would have them. Sometimes he would make his appeal in words which are distressing in their humility and abasement. It is hard to read the following—written to the chamberlain of Count Fürstenberg—without blushing for the great house of Habsburg:

I should long since have sent you a specimen of my poor work to his Highness, the Prince (to whom I beg you will say in my name that I lay myself at his feet and thank him most humbly for the present he has sent me) had I known whether or no my father had already sent him anything, and if so, what! Accordingly, I place at the end of my letter a list of the latest-born children of my fancy, amongst which his Highness has only to choose that I may hasten to serve him. If his Highness please, I could in the future pay him my respects with each of my pieces, as it is completed. Moreover, I venture to make his Highness a little proposal in the matter of music which I would ask you, my friend, to lay before your Prince. Since his Highness possesses an orchestra, his Highness might like to possess a certain number of orchestrated pieces of mine for use solely at his Court—in my poor opinion a possible gratification for him. If his Highness would be so gracious as to commission me, year by year, with a certain number of symphonies, quartets, concertos, for different instruments or other pieces according to choice, and if he would be pleased to endow me with a fixed yearly salary therefor, his Highness should be well and punctually served, and *I should be able to work with a more collected mind*, being sure of having work to do. I hope that his Highness will not take my proposition amiss, even should he be disinclined to accept it, for indeed it arises from an impulse of genuine zeal to serve his Highness diligently.

If there is any city that may with justice claim the title of Mozart's city it is neither Salzburg nor Vienna—but

Prague. In Salzburg Mozart was born, and in Vienna he lived the mature years of his life. But it was in Prague that he received appreciation commensurate with his genius.

At the end of 1786, Bondini's company had taken *Figaro* to Prague, and the Bohemians had gone mad over it. They cried for a sight of the composer. Mozart went and was intoxicated by the adulation. He wrote: "Here no one hums, sings, or whistles anything but airs . . . of *Figaro*. No other opera draws . . . except *Figaro*."

In the streets, in the café-houses, at theaters, one heard little else but *Porgi amor, Non più andrai, Voi che sapete*. And when, on January 20, Mozart himself conducted his new symphony, the audience was completely beside itself. When he sat at the piano and improvised, someone suddenly shouted "*Figaro!*" "Then he began with the favorite aria *Non più andrai*, and improvised a dozen marvelous variations which ended in deafening applause."

But he was eager to get back to Vienna. He himself did not know why. All Prague wanted him to stay. Bondini had ordered an opera and had paid him 200 ducats. But no—he would return and bend Vienna to his will. He had a new symphony to show his compatriots, and the incomparable piano concerto in C. In April and May of 1787 he had completed two string quintets, in C-major and G-minor. He was at work on a piano sonata, and had already begun work on the new opera Prague had commissioned. There was something—if one may be permitted the word—*terrifying* in all this creative period, in this spectacle of one masterpiece followed by another. One has the sense of some premonition—as if Mozart knew that he had not much longer to live and must realize in the last few years of a brief life all the creative urge of a century.

Shortly after his return from Prague a boy of seventeen came to his house accompanied by a common friend. The boy was short and stocky, almost ugly, with a face too mature for his years. He was from Bonn, he said—assistant to the court organist, Neefe—and his name was Ludwig van Beethoven. Would Mozart be willing to listen to his piano playing?

The youth played. Then he extemporized on a theme Mozart had set him. "The young man bears watching," Mozart thought. "He will make a stir in the world before long." And he offered to teach him. For a brief period the young man came to Mozart's house. But there was a wall between them barring a greater intimacy. Something in the German discouraged a closer contact. Sensitive to a fault, and proud, he enveloped himself in surly silence which chilled his warmhearted master. Mozart had enough to do without troubling himself about his temperamental newcomer. His father had died shortly before this; and work on the new opera was taking much of his time. When, after a few months, Beethoven was recalled to Bonn by news of his mother's illness, the two parted without much regret.

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The new opera came quickly. Da Ponte's libretto stirred him to swift composition. In September, Mozart was back in Prague ready for rehearsals. On November 28th, he sat up all night writing the overture. On the twenty-ninth *Don Giovanni* was produced—and took Prague by storm.

Connoisseurs and artists say that nothing like this has been given in Prague. M. Mozart himself conducted, and when he appeared in the orchestra, he was hailed by a triple acclamation.

Thus reported a contemporary journal. And Mozart himself wrote:

Everything is being done to persuade me to remain here, and write another opera. . . . But I cannot accept the offer, however flattering. . . .

Again he returned to Vienna, despite the pleas to remain in Prague. We can scarcely guess why. Perhaps he had received the news that on the fifteenth of November Gluck had died. In that case he must be on the spot. Gluck's post of chamber musician and court composer was open. Surely now the Emperor . . .

The Emperor could no longer afford to ignore the hue and cry raised in Vienna over Mozart's pitiable circumstances. Gluck's position at court, therefore, was given to him—but characteristically enough, the Emperor reduced the annual salary from 2,000 gulden to a miserable 800! And what returns he received for the gold! The production of that marvelous year 1788: the three great trios, and three of his greatest symphonies, the E-flat, the G-minor and the "Jupiter"!

And, as if to underline the paradox of these creations, the cries of distress from Mozart became greater and greater. From now on they will not cease. *Don Giovanni*, when produced in Vienna, was a failure. Concerts were becoming fewer and fewer. And 800 gulden went so fast!

If you would be so kind [he wrote to the merchant, Puchberg], so friendly, as to lend me the sum of one or two thousand gulden for a period of one or two years, at suitable interest, you would be doing me a most radical service. You will no doubt yourself realize and acknowledge that it is inconvenient, nay impossible, to live from one installment of income to another! Without a certain necessary capital sum, it is impossible to keep one's affairs in order. Nothing can be done with nothing! If you will do me this friendly service, I can *imprimo* (being in funds) more easily meet unavoidable expenses at the proper time, whereas now I have to postpone payment and then, usually at the most inconvenient time, part with my whole income at once;

and, *secondo*, work with a lighter heart and more carefree mind, and consequently earn more. . . . I have now opened my whole heart to you in a situation of great gravity to myself—that is, I have acted as a *true brother*. But it is only with a *true brother* that one can be perfectly frank!

A short tour arranged for him by Lichnowsky proved unrewarding. Constance was ill and would have to go to Baden for a cure. He scarcely knew where to turn. You cannot stem an ocean of debt with your bare fists. And even the last gift that Joseph II was to bestow on him—100 gulden for the unsuccessful opera, *Così fan tutte*—was scattered to the winds. For the moment, Mozart appeared overwhelmed by his cares.

## 19

ON February 20, 1790, Joseph II died.

Suppose you were a great composer—like Mozart, for example. True—and tragic fact!—you never had enough money to make life comfortable. *But* if you put pen to paper, and created—say, a clarinet quintet, or the D-minor piano concerto, or the G-minor symphony, or *Don Giovanni*, and saw it there before you—you would have the right to feel that nothing could destroy that work or the sense of greatness you felt. It was there, and would be there for all time.

Suppose, however, you were a Habsburg ruler of a mighty empire—Joseph II, for example—and had dreamed all your life of a great creative work, as great, say, as the G-minor symphony: an empire founded on principles of reason, ruled by a wise despot. Suppose you had ten years in which to complete the structure, and found that your last years saw all you had planned

toppling about your ears, the people you had dreamed of benefiting, your sworn enemies, and your name the object of jest, ridicule, and hate . . .

There you have them: Mozart and Joseph II.

For the last years of the Emperor's life were a cup of bitterness such as few people are fated to drink. He had set out to be wiser and greater than Frederick the Great. But he was now a broken, feeble, old man who scarcely knew what the morrow would bring and who begged for a speedy death.

He had wanted to give his people a liberal constitution; he had wanted to free the serfs; he had wanted to put an end to superstition, intolerance, religious domination. What splendid intentions he had had! Justice, equality, wealth, security, happiness for his people. . . . And what results! The inheritance laws broke up families. The peasants complained of lack of food. The prelates loathed the religious and social egalitarianism. The nobles resented the new order, the result of which, in the words of Joseph, made many of them merely lieutenants.

And here he was, not yet forty-nine years old! Alone!

He was witnessing the disintegration of feudal Europe, and the sight appalled him. "A general folly," he said to Ségur, the French diplomat, "seems to have seized all peoples; those of Brabant, for example, are revolting because I wished to give them that which your nation demands in a great crisis!"

Joseph's death was lamented by few. Hungary was gay. Brabant exulted. In bitterness, Joseph had prepared his own epitaph: "Here lies Joseph II, who was unfortunate in all his enterprises." And the people added in mockery:

*Der Bauern Gott, der Bürger Not  
Des Edels Spott liegt auf dem Tod.*

The peasant's God, the citizen's woe,  
The nobleman's scorn is dying now!

20

LEOPOLD II was unintelligent, unimaginative and—unmusical. Completely ignorant of music and musicians, he proceeded to change the artistic personnel at the court. One after another they went: Antonio Salieri, Lorenzo da Ponte and Count Rosenberg. In the face of these dismissals, Mozart felt that his hour had come. He applied for the place left vacant by Salieri, that of *Kapellmeister*; it would have given him no little satisfaction to hold sway in a post vacated by his most bitter enemy. Instead, an unknown and mediocre musician named Weigl received the appointment. Mozart then applied for the post of second *Kapellmeister*, for the post of church composer, for the post of instructor to the Archduchess. And one after another these positions were denied him.

He felt very much alone now. Da Ponte was in London. Haydn, too, was on his way there, on a triumphal tour. The farewell between master and disciple was not made easier by Mozart's morbid feeling that they would never see each other again.

And at this darkest moment—when he seemed more than ever caught in the maze of his debts, illness, loneliness and despair—Emanuel Schikaneder, impresario of the Theater in dem Freihaus auf der Wieden, came to him with a request to compose a German opera, this

time a fairy tale. How gladly Mozart set to work upon *Die Zauberflöte*!

While he was still at work on the opera—it was in the middle of July, 1791—a mysterious stranger dressed in gray appeared to him at his home in the Rauhensteingasse, and requested that he compose a requiem. The fee was generous; the only condition imposed upon Mozart was that he make no attempt to inquire after the source of the commission. In reality, the stranger was the messenger of Count von Walsegg, who made it a habit to commission musical works which he later exhibited as his own. But Mozart—oppressed by thoughts of death, harassed by illness and care—suddenly became obsessed with the idea that the mysterious stranger was an otherworldly messenger come to beg him to compose his own requiem. When *Die Zauberflöte* was completed, in September, Mozart set to work feverishly upon the other commission which became more and more associated in his mind with his own death.

*Die Zauberflöte*—that farrago of nonsense, banality, disorder, profundity and Oriental and Masonic symbolism, which Schikaneder built up on a tale by Wieland—Mozart transformed through his ravishing music into a work of art. It was produced at Schikaneder's little wooden theater "auf der Wieden" on September 30. The Viennese public, usually susceptible to the gentle nonsense and irony of fairy tales, remained at first cool. But succeeding evenings brought with them ever-increasing approbation that was to persist for one hundred performances.

But the *Requiem* preyed on his mind.

I cannot remove from my eyes the image of the stranger. I see him continually. He begs me, exhorts me, and then commands me to work. I

continue, because composition fatigues me less than rest. Moreover, I have nothing more to fear. I know from what I feel that the hour is striking; I am on the point of death; I have finished before I could enjoy my talent. . . . I thus must finish my funeral song, which I must not leave incomplete.

Authentic or not (for there are those who question whether Mozart wrote it), this letter to da Ponte expressed what Mozart must have felt at the time. His hour was striking.

One day in November he was at the Silberner Schwan tavern, where the waiter Joseph Diener knew him well. More despondent than ever, Mozart ordered wine, but could not touch it. "I feel," he said to the sympathetic Diener, "that the music is over with. I am chilled with a fever which I do not understand. Drink my wine, Diener, and come to me tomorrow early. We need kindling wood. It is getting cold. . . . "

## 21

MOZART knew he was dying. Though racked by pain, he did not abandon the composition of his *Requiem*. When he realized that his wasted strength made further work impossible, he explained to his pupil Süßmayer how it was to be brought to completion. Evenings when he felt relieved, he would hold his watch in his hand and point out to his friends the exact moment in which one of his favorite arias from *Die Zauberflöte* was being sung at the theater. It gave him pleasure to think that his opera was now beginning to attract attention in Vienna.

On the fourth of December he asked to be propped up in his bed. Then, calling his friends closer to him, he gave them the manuscript of his "Lacrimosa" from the

*Requiem* and begged them to join him in singing it. In the midst of the singing he burst into tears.

That night Mozart's wife Constance, her sister Sophia and Süßmayer the pupil knelt at his bedside. A priest had been called to administer extreme unction. At midnight Mozart said farewell to his family. Then he turned to the wall. When they touched him, they found that he was dead.

The funeral, on the sixth of December, was pitiful. It was a raw and cold day, made more drab by a persistent drizzle. Baron van Swieten had advised economy. A third-class funeral, costing eleven gulden twenty-five kreuzer (which Constance herself had to pay), had been arranged for. The musical services at St. Stephen's were directed by Salieri—the lifelong enmity was at last over. The few friends—Baron van Swieten and Süßmayer among them—did not, because of the rain, follow the coffin to the churchyard of St. Mark's, and Constance was too prostrated by grief to attend the funeral at all.

Alone and unmourned, Mozart's body was consigned to a pauper's grave. No tombstone or cross to mark the place! Some years later, when Constance came to St. Mark's, she was unable to identify the spot where Mozart had been buried.

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BOOK TWO

STURM UND DRANG

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JOSEPH had, with prophetic insight, distrusted his nephew Francis. He had found him immobile, indolent, hard to stir to action. "There is no soul in that machine," he had complained.

The Emperor Francis tragically justified this characterization. Outwardly he appeared timid, shy, retiring. Within he harbored the nature of an inflexible despot. One month after his accession France was at war with Austria. The Bastille had fallen, and the royal family of France was in prison. In the stormy period which followed—when what was needed were coolness, wisdom and sobriety—Francis pursued a policy of intense and unmitigated reaction, cruelty and repression such as had not been witnessed in years. "Severity" was the word that appeared most often in his instructions. He would repress the tide of enlightenment and revolutionary agitation with the gallows, the knout and the dungeon. He would stamp out every vestige of democratic thought; he would drown out all talk about the rights of man and equality. He would subject everything to meticulous critical scrutiny for subversive thought. Even Mozart's *Zauberflöte* he damned because he suspected it of veiling revolutionary ideas in obscure symbolism!

All the reforms of his uncle Joseph and his father were to go overboard. He yearned for a return of the old order.

And so he set about the task of reaction. He needed *Naderer*—informers, spies, police agents. The very scum of society was there to help him, to bring him tales of con-

spiracies, of wild plots, of dangerous talk. The Inquisition was here again at its worst, and it found its Torquemadas in the indefatigable and gifted but inexorable Count Franz Saurau and in Count Pergen.

The hunt for "Jacobins" was on. And if there were no real conspiracies afoot, it was not difficult to manufacture them. The French revolutionary ideas must be discredited at all costs. If you discovered a plot to dynamite the city, or to set it afire, or to massacre the population, well . . .

And so, in the summer of 1794, the Jacobins were captured. They bore some of the most respected names in the city. There was the magistrate Prandstätter; the writer Hebenstreit; the Emperor's former tutor, Riedel; and a relative of the Archbishop. In secret trial they were condemned, and without much ceremony. After being exposed to Viennese public gaze for a few days they were executed. The worst they might have been charged with was talk. Perhaps they sometimes sang the revolutionary *Eipeldauerlied*. Perhaps they were Francophile in their leanings. But certainly there is no evidence—nor was there any at the time—of any overt act.

But what place had truth or justice or mercy here, when Francis and his lackeys were intent on setting a bloodthirsty example which the Viennese were not soon to forget?

Their hours taken up with listening to stories brought them by servant girls, porters, beggars, prostitutes and other equally reputable pillars of society, Francis and his aides had little time or energy for administrative matters. Warnings availed little. His minister again and again brought him subterranean pamphlets, criticizing the court and the administration for their inefficiency—

urging reform. But Francis was lackadaisical. He was filled with hopelessness. He was paralyzed. If everything went to the dogs, he is reported to have said, he could always escape to America!

It was useless to warn the Emperor, to recall to him the fate of Louis XVI, to point to the ominous revival of the name of Joseph II on the lips of the populace. His brother, the Archduke Charles, shook his head sadly. "Austria," he said, "has no more dangerous enemies than its own rulers."

Chaos. Corruption. Bureaucratic inefficiency. Justice that was travestied. An officialdom that was ignorant and venal. Economic crisis, and war. . . . "It seems," a foreign observer remarked, "that everything that breathes the Viennese air is immediately paralyzed."

As if to cap the madness of his rule, Francis embarked on disastrous wars with France. Perhaps it was not entirely madness. Perhaps a war or two would distract his Viennese subjects from dangerous speculation. They might, so to speak, clear the atmosphere of the oppressive vapors, might even arouse patriotic fervor—especially if they were carried on in the name of a noble cause. Down with revolutionary France! Down with the Terror! Defend the German lands! What matter if your high and noble words concealed imperialistic dreams of your own—say, a hunger for a slice of Prussia, or Poland, or Turkey, or Italy?

From his palace in Vienna, Francis watched his armies march to their destruction. For a long time he did not even deem it sufficiently important to join them. When he did, a caustic commentator remarked: "*Venit, vidit, perdidit!*"—"He came, he saw—he lost!"

The Viennese learned quickly. They adapted themselves readily. They spoke less openly—if they spoke at all—of prohibited matters. They fled, as from a pestilence, all talk of politics. They read only prescribed literature. They turned to dancing, to the theater, to music, to the café-house, to love-making, to idle gossip. No dangerous ideas here, they reflected. More than ever before, their levity and frothiness of conversation masked the hollowness within. If they formerly enjoyed the reputation of being Europe's most adept sensualists, what could be said of them now that they threw all of their energies into the enjoyment of the present—with such abandon as to shock even men of the world? That bitter and unscrupulous politician, Thugut, laughed benignly, "Now they can dance their little dances, and eat their fried chicken in peace!"

When they were commanded to show their patriotic ardor, the Viennese sang the national anthem which Joseph Haydn had composed for the Emperor. *Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser*—"God Preserve Our Emperor Francis." They sang lustily—but as they sang they sometimes cursed within.

2

IN the midst of this turmoil of armies and battles, in a world aflame with the spirit of the Revolution, when the eyes of all Europe were fixed on France with wonder or fear, or admiration and hope—Ludwig van Beethoven arrived inconspicuously from Bonn for his second visit to Vienna, and took lodgings in the Alserstrasse 45. Determined to make his mark, young Beethoven bought a

wig, silk hose, boots and a fashionable coat so as to be at home in the salons of Vienna—sartorial trimmings which he soon discarded. His reputation in Bonn had preceded him; his patrons there had generous friends in Vienna who were ready to make him welcome.

He looked much older than his twenty-two years. He was short, stocky and compact, with a face leonine in strength, but disfigured, pockmarked and florid. His awkwardness of gesture and bearing was, at first, heightened by his studied elegance in dress; then intensified by a complete disregard for his appearance. Strength—crude, ungovernable strength—spoke through him. Few knew or suspected that this was a new age arrived, the very spirit of the French Revolution, a greater, stronger, fiercer, nobler Figaro, who had read Rousseau passionately and was a republican at heart.

The salons were all open to him: those of Prince Lichnowsky and Baron van Swieten, Prince Esterházy, Countess Thun, Prince Lobkowitz, Prince Kinsky, and later even the palace of the Archduke.

The wild strength that breathed through him made him an intractable pupil. Though he had returned to Vienna to study, not Joseph Haydn, nor Albrechtsberger of St. Stephen's, nor Salieri could satisfy him or be satisfied with him. How, indeed, could the quiet, imperturbable Haydn—greatest spokesman of an age gone by—sit patiently and watch the untrammelled stormings of the younger man, whose talent he admired but whose ungovernable genius he did not understand? Or what, for that matter, could meticulous Antonio Salieri, past master in the formal Italian style, teach this young untutored bear? Best to let him go his way, and shake your head in disapproval. "He has never learned any-

thing," Albrechtsberger once remarked sadly, "and he can do nothing in decent style." Lesser men, more sympathetic and more farsighted, took to him and taught him: modest men like the young Ignaz Schuppanzigh, later the founder of a great string quartet; men like Johann Schenk, the composer, who was filled with such rapture when Beethoven improvised that, forty years later, he could not speak of him without tears.

With what dismay the old must have faced the new! At Prince Lichnowsky's, sitting side by side were well-groomed Haydn and deferential Salieri, "both dressed in wig, shoes, silk hose, entirely after the old fashion." Beethoven was there too, carelessly dressed, his short hair unkempt. When *he* spoke, it was with the air of an equal. Where were the subservience, reverence and obedience? Toward his benefactors, as to his friends, Beethoven was impetuous and tactless, often rude and bumptious, but extremely sensitive and easily offended. Time and again he rewarded the generosity and tact of his patron, Prince Lichnowsky, with an outburst of passionate anger. He accepted favors as though they were due him. An indomitable pride swept through him. Once he insulted the guests in the Lichnowsky music room because they spoke while he was playing for them. "I shall not perform before such swine," he cried, as he slammed the lid of the piano.

"With whom need I be afraid of measuring my strength?" the young giant wrote. What could *they* say to words such as these? "This much will I tell you, that you will only see me again when I am really great, not only greater as an artist, but as a man you will find me better, more perfect." Or, somewhat later: "Beethoven"—he frequently spoke of himself in the third person—"makes

no boast, and despises everything which he has not received through his art and merits."

Words such as these have tempted some critics to tax him with arrogance. Pride, yes; sensitiveness, yes; torment, yes. But arrogance?—no more than one can speak of the arrogance of a tempest. What spoke in him was the great, volcanic, creative man, conscious of his own strength, certain of his destiny. "*Was ich auf dem Herzen habe, muss heraus, und darum schreibe ich!*"—"I must write—for what weighs on my heart, I *must* express!" Everywhere in Europe, wherever genius spoke, such words were now being heard. The "I"—the creative personality—was asserting itself as never before. In Beethoven it found its greatest spokesman.

He could not stay long in one place, and kept on moving as if possessed. Now at Prince Lichnowsky's, now Am Tiefen Graben, now in Mödling, in Heiligenstadt, on the Mülkerbastei—sometimes renting three or four flats at the same time. The genius that could shape everything musically, the architect who could construct symphonies of ineffable magnificence could never keep his own house in order.

Papers and garments [were] strewn about everywhere [Karl Czerny is describing his rooms Am Tiefen Graben], several trunks, bare walls, a shaky chair in front of the piano. It was the same all over. He would not allow housekeepers or servants to do much cleaning because, as he lamented, he was then unable to find anything. Whenever, on occasions, he consented to see a visitor, it was usually in the most negligent raiment: a gray jacket of fuzzy cloth opened at the neck, wide pantaloons, slippers, his raven black hair in disorder, his face almost dark, often unshaven for days. . . .

Already in 1793, two years after his arrival, he was acclaimed as "beyond controversy one of the foremost pianoforte players"—though envy, sometimes, and a taste for an older style did not preclude carping criticism.

Power, character, bravura, virtuosity, feeling, strength—these he possessed; also the gift of inexhaustible improvisation. What some deplored in his playing was a lack of delicacy and refinement, such as were found in Mozart and Hummel. The large hands would rest on the keys awhile, strike a few discords, sometimes in playfulness, sometimes in anger, and then, once finding their theme, they would transport the hearers.

He played the piano, taught others to play, grew within himself. In eight years' time he produced more than ninety compositions, among them two symphonies and three piano concertos. For the time at least, Vienna was his. For a time at least, Viennese society spoiled him. Before the old century came to an end he appeared in public concerts twice, published a first set of trios, a number of piano sonatas, and a popular song, *Adelaide*. He was beset by requests. "I have more orders than I can execute. I have six or seven publishers for each one of my works, and could have more if I choose. No more bargaining! I name my terms and they pay."

The birth of a new century marked the beginning of a new creative period in his life. An official announcement ran as follows:

Today, Wednesday, April 2nd, 1800, Herr Ludwig van Beethoven will have the honor of giving a grand concert for his own benefit in the Royal Imperial Theater beside the Burg. . . . The pieces which will be performed are . . . a grand concerto for the pianoforte, played and composed by Herr Ludwig van Beethoven . . . a Septet, humbly and obediently dedicated to Her Majesty the Empress, and composed by Herr Ludwig van Beethoven for four stringed instruments and three wind instruments . . . [and] a new grand symphony with complete orchestra composed by Ludwig van Beethoven.

The new century—Beethoven's first symphony.

It cannot be said that Vienna of 1800 even faintly guessed that musical history was being made. The conductor of the orchestra, Paul Wranitsky, was hopelessly inefficient. But even the most competent of conductors would have been at a loss to cope with musicians who, feeling that Beethoven's music was too difficult to perform, refused to take the work seriously. The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* of that year reported: "In the second movement of the symphony, they took the matter so easily that there was no spirit, in spite of the conductor." As for the music of the symphony itself, there was, according to the same source, "too much use of wind instruments, so much so that the music sounded as if written for a military band rather than for an orchestra." The musical graybeards in the audience must have been startled by the opening chord of the symphony, a dominant seventh, instead of the customary tonic triad, and berated the ignorance of a poorly tutored student. The minuet seemed heavy-footed (how could they understand that this was an anticipation of the Beethoven scherzo?).

Had they not forty years before denounced Gluck's *Orfeo* in similar words? They had said it was complicated, noisy, unmelodious. As once they had failed to welcome the giant birth of the new opera—so now they were appalled by the strangeness of this, the first of the new symphonies.

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ACROSS these years of great creativeness, inaugurated by the first symphony, falls the dark shadow of tragedy.

In June, 1800, Beethoven wrote to his friend, Karl Amenda:

How often do I wish you were with me, for your Beethoven is most unhappy and at strife with nature and the Creator. . . . Only think that the noblest part of me, my sense of hearing, has become very weak. Already when you were with me, I noted traces of it, and I said nothing. Now it has become worse, and it remains to be seen whether it can ever be healed. . . . What a sad life I am now compelled to lead. I must avoid all that is near and dear to me. . . . Oh! how happy should I now be if I had my perfect hearing, for I should then hasten to you. As it is, I must in all things be behindhand; my best years will slip away without bringing forth what, with my talent and strength, I ought to have accomplished. I must now have recourse to resignation. . . . I am convinced good fortune will not fail me. With whom need I be afraid of measuring my strength? . . . *Please keep as a great secret what I have told you about my hearing; trust no one, whoever it may be, with it.*

To Wegeler, he wrote on June 29:

Only the humming in my ears continues night and day without ceasing. I may truly say that my life is a wretched one. For the last two years I have avoided all society, for it is impossible for me to say to people, "I am deaf." Were my profession any other, it would not matter so much, but in my profession it is a terrible thing; and my enemies, of whom there are not a few, what would they say to all this?

To give you an idea of my extraordinary deafness, I will tell you that when at the theater I am obliged to lean forward close to the orchestra, in order to understand what is being said on the stage. When somewhat at a distance, I cannot hear the high tones of instruments, voices. In speaking, it is not surprising that there are people who have never noticed it, for as a rule I am often absent-minded, and they account for it in that way. Often I can scarcely hear anyone speaking to me: the tones, yes, but not the actual words. Yet as soon as anyone shouts, it is unbearable. What will come of all this, heaven only knows!

Vering says, that there will *certainly be improvement, though perhaps not a perfect cure*. I have, indeed, often cursed my existence. Plutarch taught me resignation. If nothing else is possible, I will defy my fate, although there will be moments in my life when I shall be God's most wretched creature. . . . I live only in my music, and I have scarcely begun one thing when I start another. As I am now working, I am often engaged on three or four things at the same time.

"Plutarch taught me resignation!" . . . "Resignation, what a miserable refuge!" . . . "I live only in my music, and I have scarcely begun one thing when I start on another!" . . . "I will seize fate by the throat; it shall certainly never overcome me!" . . . "Oh, life is so beautiful, would I could have a thousand lives!" . . .

How the struggle went on within him! Despair. Resignation. Darkness. Light. Renunciation. Affirmation.

Thus with the year

Seasons return; but not to me returns  
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men  
 Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,  
 Presented with a universal blank  
 Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,  
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.  
 So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,  
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
 Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence  
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.

So Milton had written of his blindness. The deaf Beethoven could not hear the busy hum of the city, nor when in the country the chatter of birds, the rustling of the wind in the trees, nor the stream's rushing, nor the shepherd's pipe, nor the gay singing of the peasant folk. To him, who loved these things as intensely as life itself, resignation in the presence of the great silence was not easy.

In the summer of 1802 he retired to Heiligenstadt on the advice of his physician. The innumerable diagnoses had almost led him to despair of a cure. Still, perhaps here? . . .

Heiligenstadt—the old charm of it is still there! You pass beyond the confines of the city, beyond the Karl Marx apartments (now—after 1934—the Heiligenstädterhof) into the charming vineyards and hills of Grinzing. Turning right, you are in Heiligenstadt. You will easily find the house in which Beethoven lived that year. A simple, unadorned white house with a large entrance which opens into a courtyard. In the rear of the court rises a stone stairway leading straight to Beethoven's apartment.

Here took place the life and death struggle out of which emerged that supreme document, the Heiligenstadt Testament—that agonized cry of despair, wrung from him by the awful threat of death and destruction.

O ye men who regard or declare me to be malignant, stubborn or cynical, how unjust ye are toward me. You do not know the secret cause of my seeming so. From childhood onward my heart and mind prompted me to be kind and tender, and I was ever inclined to accomplish great deeds. But only think that during the last six years, I have been in a wretched condition, rendered worse by unintelligent physicians. Deceived from year to year with hopes of improvement, and then finally forced to the prospect of lasting *infirmity* (which may last for years or be totally incurable).

Born with a fiery, active temperament, even susceptible of the diversion of society, I had soon to retire from the world, to live a solitary life. At times, even, I endeavored to forget all this, but how harshly was I driven back by the redoubled experience of my bad hearing. Yet it was not possible for me to say to men: Speak louder, shout, for I am deaf. Alas! how could I declare the weakness of a sense which in me ought to be more acute than in others—a sense which formerly I possessed in highest perfection, a perfection such as few in my profession enjoy, or ever have enjoyed. No, I cannot do it.

Forgive, therefore, if you see me withdraw, when I would willingly mix with you. My misfortune pains me doubly, in that I am certain to be misunderstood. For me there can be no recreation in the society of my good fellow creatures, no refined conversations, no interchange of thought. Almost alone, and only mixing in society when absolutely necessary, I am compelled to live as an exile. If I approach near to people, a feeling of hot anxiety comes over me lest my condition be noticed—for so it was during

these past six months which I spent in the country. . . . But how humiliating it was when some one standing close to me heard a distant flute, and I heard *nothing*, or a shepherd's singing, and again I heard *nothing*. Such incidents almost drove me to despair; at times I was on the point of putting an end to my life. Art alone restrained my hand. Oh! it seemed as if I could not quit this earth until I had produced all I felt within me, and so I continued this wretched life—wretched, indeed, with so sensitive a body that a somewhat sudden change can throw me from the best into the worst state. . . .

Patience, I am told, I must choose as my guide. . . . Oh, my fellow men, when one day you read this, remember that you were unjust to me, and let the unfortunate one console himself if he can find one like himself, who in spite of all obstacles which nature has thrown in his way has still done everything in his power to be received into the ranks of worthy artists and men. . . .

So let it be. I joyfully hasten to meet death. If it come before I have had opportunity to develop all my artistic faculties, it will come, my hard fate notwithstanding, too soon, and I should probably wish it later—yet even then I shall be happy, for will it not deliver me from a state of endless suffering? Come when thou wilt, I shall face thee courageously. Farewell, and when I am dead, do not entirely forget me. This I deserve from you, for during my lifetime, I often thought of you, and how to make you happy. Be ye so. . . .

Heiligenstadt, October, 1802, thus I take my farewell of you—and indeed sadly—yes, that fond hope which I entertained when I came here, of being at any rate healed up to a certain point, must be entirely abandoned. As the leaves of autumn fall and fade, so it has withered away for me; almost the same as when I came here do I go away—even the high courage which often in the beautiful summer days quickened me, that has vanished. O Providence, let me have just one pure day of *joy*; so long is it since true joy filled my heart. Oh when, oh when, oh Divine Being, shall I be able once again to feel it in the temple of nature and of men. Never—no—that would be too hard.

In this crucible of suffering and despair Beethoven shaped his own destiny—the destiny of loneliness.

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Only one person, he had once believed, could save him from despair—the woman he loved. In an earlier moment he had written, in a mood of hope and exultation:

My life is somewhat pleasanter, for I mix in society. You can scarcely imagine what a dreary sad life I have led during the past two years. My weak hearing always seemed to me like a ghost, and I ran away from people, was forced to appear as a misanthrope though not at all in my character. This change has been brought about by an enchanting maiden who loves me, and whom I love. Again during the past two years, I have had some happy moments, and for the first time I feel that marriage can bring happiness. Unfortunately, she is not of my station in life. . . .

And as his illness weighed him down and racked him, he poured all his passion into his letter to the "immortal beloved one." Was she Giulietta Guicciardi to whom he dedicated the "*Moonlight*" *Sonata*, or Therese von Brunswick for whom he had written the *Sonata Appassionata*, or Theresa Malfatti? Who will ever know? Few women have received the equal of such a letter, or of the passion burning in it.

Yes, I have resolved to wander in distant lands, until I can fly to your arms, and feel that with you I have a real home; with you encircling me about, I can send my soul into the kingdom of spirits. Yes, unfortunately, it must be so. Calm yourself and all the more since you know my faithfulness towards you, never can another possess my heart, never—never—Oh God, why must one part from what one so loves, and yet my life in V. at present is a wretched one. Your love has made me one of the happiest and, at the same time, one of the unhappiest of men—at my age, I need a quiet, steady life. Is that possible in our situation? . . . Be calm, only by calm consideration of our existence can we attain our aim to live together—calm—love me—today—yesterday—what tearful longing after you—you—my life—my all—farewell—Oh, continue to love me, never misjudge the faithful heart—of Your Beloved L.—Ever yours—Ever mine—Ever each other's.  
. . .

Whoever the woman was, she was not for him. . . .

As for Beethoven, he clambered out of the darkness into the light—clambered up to the mountaintop peaks and stood facing the light—*alone!*

"I will seize fate by the throat!"

"I shall live only in my music!"

As a pianist he was through. Henceforth, he would dedicate himself to composition, hammering the pattern of his thoughts into great symphonies. He had already composed two, but the third was to be the epic of heroism. The heroic poem which once he had written with Napoleon in mind and which he rededicated when Napoleon became emperor—must, with greater justice, be regarded as the first affirmation of triumph on Beethoven's part. It was the first of his great symphonies. It was Beethoven's first word on emerging from darkness.

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## 4

As the years passed he grew prouder, and sometimes even more scornful. He must have men and women around him who believed in him as fiercely and as passionately as he believed in himself. To Prince Lobkowitz he once said: "With men who do not wish to believe in me because I am as yet unknown to universal fame, I cannot and will not associate!" Such men he found—men who clung to him, understood him, bore with him.

It was hard to be his friend. As his deafness increased, he became more sensitive, more irascible; his petulance and temper broke through at the slightest provocation. His friend, Ferdinand Ries, has recorded how, at a noonday meal in the Silberner Schwan

the waiter brought him the wrong dish. Scarcely had Beethoven spoken a few words about the matter, when he seized the dish (it was a mess of lungs with plenty of gravy) and threw it at the waiter's head. The poor fellow had an armful of other dishes . . . and could not help himself; the gravy ran down his face. He and Beethoven screamed and vituperated while the other guests roared with laughter.

He became sensitive even to the most trivial offenses. In the summer of 1806 he broke with his lifelong patron, Prince Lichnowsky, because he had been asked to perform for some visiting French officers (after 1804 Beethoven hated everything French!). For five years thereafter Beethoven would not speak a word to the most generous of his admirers. Equally trivial and innocent incidents caused ruptures with other friends. From Hummel he became estranged because he misinterpreted a casual remark and would permit no explanation to heal the breach. Even his friends from Bonn—those who understood him best—he antagonized again and again through his suspiciousness. The best of them, Stephan von Breuning, who had nursed him through a serious illness, he drove away over a trifle; Ferdinand Ries he suspected unjustly of a scheme to obtain the conductorship at Cassel originally offered to him. Yet, when he came to his senses, he was genuinely contrite, and would write letters that were self-denunciatory.

Yet there were friends who understood him, who clung to him, came back to him after each storm and offered him noble friendship: the pathetic invalid, Countess Erdödy; Prince Lobkowitz, head of the court theaters in Vienna; Archduke Rudolph, who could be tolerant even toward Beethoven's republican views; Count Rasoumovsky, one of the greatest patrons of music in Vienna, for whom Beethoven composed a set of three string quartets.

How they must have loved him, for all his bad manners, pride and inflammability! In 1809, when he was offered an appointment in Cassel, his friends—headed by Prince Lobkowitz and Archduke Rudolph—compromised him by guaranteeing him a fixed annual salary of 4,000

gulden if he promised to remain in Vienna. What would such a gesture have meant to Mozart? . . . Beethoven accepted and remained. He knew inwardly that for all his bold talk he would never part from Vienna, from his favorite walks in Heiligenstadt and Döbling, from his disordered lodgings in the city, above all else, from friends who had proved so patient and understanding.

But his pride was nurtured by the consciousness of his powers, by a conviction of his greatness, by a sublime confidence in himself and his music. The *Eroica Symphony* had been followed by the *Waldstein* and the *Appassionata* piano sonatas, by the fourth concerto for piano and orchestra, and—most important of all—by an opera, his first, which he was composing for the new Theater an der Wien.

“With whom need I be afraid of measuring my strength?” . . .

## 5

A STONE’S throw from his old Theater auf der Wieden where he had originally produced *Die Zauberflöte*, Emanuel Schikaneder opened the new and handsome Theater an der Wien. Supplied with funds by the Viennese merchant Zitterbarth, he embarked on the ambitious venture of rivaling the productions at the Court Theater in the hope of drawing the Viennese public to his house and further enriching himself. The last performance at the old Theater auf der Wieden took place on June 12, 1801. One day later the new theater opened with a heroic opera, *Alexander*, the libretto by Schikaneder himself, the music by Franz Teyber, *Kapellmeister* of the new theater.

The Theater an der Wien was a delight to the eye. Its foyer was a tasteful blend of blue and silver; the drop curtains represented caricatures of figures from Mozart's *Zauberflöte*. It could seat seven hundred, and had room for almost as many standees. The stage was said to be the largest in all Germany, capable of accommodating five hundred actors and fifty horses; and its technical equipment was of the best.

Schikaneder was proud of that stage. For two years he exploited its resources fully. Good opera did not interest him half so much as good spectacles; the more elaborate the better. For these pieces the music was generally composed by efficient but none too original composers in Schikaneder's employ, Ignaz Seyfried, Johann Baptist Hanneberg, and Franz Teyber.

But occasionally—although at long intervals—the Theater an der Wien presented solid musical fare. On March 23, 1803, it introduced to Vienna an important operatic novelty, *Lodoïska*, a work of "a certain Luigi Cherubini," which had enjoyed great success in Paris. The opera was so greatly appreciated by the audiences at the theater, that Baron von Braun, manager of the Court Theater—who had been watching the affairs of his competitor with no little concern—immediately procured Cherubini's *Water Carrier* for his repertoire. But the shrewd Schnikaneder was not asleep. He stole a march on Baron von Braun by producing the very same opera one day before the announced opening at the Court Theater, causing no little turmoil, anger and laughter.

Such tactics were an open challenge which the Court Theater accepted. A spirited, bitter and now open rivalry developed between the two opera houses. The

Court Theater presented Cherubini's *Medea* on November 6, and the Theater an der Wien countered with Cherubini's *Der Bernardsberg* one month later. In this savage duel between opera houses—in which Cherubini was the chosen weapon—a genuine vogue for Cherubini's operas arose in Vienna. This vogue proved so great, even among the most discriminating of Vienna's music lovers, that Baron von Braun decided on a strategic coup. Secretly he left for Paris, and there contracted with Cherubini for a new opera to be composed especially for the Court Theater of Vienna.

Schikaneder and his Theater an der Wien were now faced with the task of finding a counter-attraction with which to offset the successful strategy of the Court Theater. Lavish spectacles were not enough. A great opera was needed, and a great composer. Schikaneder looked about him eagerly. Who was there in Vienna who could compose another *Zauberflöte*? There was the notorious Abbé Vogler—whose strange ideas and innovations in the teaching of music, whose ambitious and frequently unplayable music, whose self-glorification and pompousness made him a perpetual subject for discussion. Schikaneder engaged Vogler to compose the opera *Samori* which, when presented at the Theater an der Wien in May, 1804, was a moderate success. But Schikaneder knew that Vogler was not enough. A much greater attraction was needed, a name more powerful than Vogler's—especially since Cherubini himself was coming to Vienna to assist in the production of some of his operas at the Court Theater.

Then Schikaneder thought of Beethoven. True, Beethoven had as yet composed nothing for the stage, except a successful ballet, *Prometheus*. But Beethoven's name

was well known in Vienna; some even thought of him as Mozart's successor. In June, 1803, Schikaneder turned to him with the proposal, and Beethoven accepted.

But Schikaneder's victory was of short duration. Before the new opera could be performed the ownership of the Theater an der Wien passed out of his hands and into those of his powerful rival, Baron von Braun. Schikaneder was dismissed, and in his place Joseph von Sonnleithner was appointed.

The plans for an opera by Beethoven were apparently not to be realized. But unexpectedly Sonnleithner retired from his new position, and the Baron decided to reinstate Schikaneder as the manager of the Theater an der Wien. Then and there a new contract was signed with Beethoven. He was to set to music Sonnleithner's adaptation of a French play by Bouilly, entitled *Léonore, ou l'amour conjugal*.

## 6

OF all his works, Beethoven loved best those created between 1803 and 1806; and, of these, he lavished most care and affection upon the opera *Léonore*, or *Fidelio* as he was later to call it. Storm-born child of his years of great sorrow, it cost him greater pains than any of his other compositions. He was never to be quite satisfied with it. "This work," he said ten years later when he was preparing its final form, "has won me the martyr's crown."

The task exasperated him, challenged his powers, haunted him. His first opera! What Gluck had done after many years of experiment, what Mozart had done

after years of trial, he would do at one stroke! Nowhere is the fullness of his strength and confidence revealed as in this herculean moment.

"*O Mensch,*" he cried, "*hilf dir selbst!*"—"Oh man, help yourself!" Triumph over your sorrow, beat down pain and suffering. Your fate is in your hands! No other God can help you—but the God within you!

For a moment he had been in danger of succumbing to despair. Death seemed about to destroy him. But he had achieved freedom. He had once looked with hope upon the emancipation of man proclaimed in the French Revolution and carried far and wide by Napoleon; and he had believed in Napoleon, but Napoleon had belied his hope. Yet not even the tyrant could negate the freedom of the human spirit—Beethoven's own republican spirit. And of this he had already spoken in the *Eroica*.

Now in the midst of the political ferment, repression and war he was to wrestle with the theme anew, his faith in himself and in humanity unshaken. Beethoven had not read Schiller's *Don Carlos* in vain. . . . The libretto of *Léonore* was poor—neither Bouilly nor Sonnleithner was a Calsabigi or a da Ponte. The mediocrity and melodramatic claptrap of the book were to prove a source of great trial to him. But the theme of Freedom and Love was close to him, was in his eyes magnificent.

The devotion of a wife to her husband, so that she follows him in disguise to prison where he lies unjustly jailed, and at the end is reunited with him in freedom—the triumph of love over death—was it not what he himself had dreamed and spoken of in his immortal letters? Was he still thinking of the beautiful Giulietta Guicciardi, or of Therese von Brunswick, when he sketched Leonore and poured into the music the depth of his own deep

renunciation? Himself, he had no beloved, no wife, no home. Leonore is the Immortal Beloved such as he believed her to be, translated into the realm of dreams. And in the realm of dreams he was Florestan, whom Leonore had come to liberate.

But Leonore was also the symbol of Freedom. In freeing Florestan she had also achieved the liberation of the others imprisoned in darkness. See the prisoners emerge groping into the light (the music gropingly uncertain and soft) and hear them in their final paean to freedom:

*Heil! heil! Heil sei dem Tag  
Heil sei der Stunde,  
Die lang ersehnt, unvermeint,  
Gerechtigkeit mit Huld im Bunde  
Vor unseres Grabes Tor erscheint.*

Hail, hail the day,  
Hail the glorious hour,  
So long awaited, yet un hoped for;  
When Justice joined with Mercy  
Appears before us at the door of our grave.

And the final chorus resounds with the words of Schiller: "*Wer ein holdes Weib errungen, stimm' in unsern Jubel ein.*"—"He who has won for himself a lovely woman, let him join in our rejoicing."

A little, stocky man with unkempt hair sat in Schönbrunn under his favorite gnarled tree and hummed and howled his melodies. Then, eagerly, he set them down on paper, working incessantly, sometimes rewriting one aria eighteen times. And while he was struggling with the first version of the opera, in the summer of 1805, Napoleon was marching on Vienna. . . .

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BEETHOVEN's opera *Fidelio* was produced at the Theater an der Wien at an unfortunate hour. The first three presentations took place on November 20, 21, and 22, 1805, while Vienna was seething with political and economic turmoil. The French had captured Ulm on the twentieth of October. Then Bernadotte entered Salzburg. On November 13, Prince Murat entered Vienna itself with 15,000 troops. In the face of this invasion the court and fashionable society fled from the city. Napoleon took up quarters in Schönbrunn; Prince Murat occupied the palace of the Archduke Albrecht; General Hanlin took over the palatial establishment of Prince Lobkowitz.

The occupation of Vienna by the French coincided with an acute economic crisis. The French had to be quartered; they looted the shops of their belongings; they consumed food and drink in prodigious quantities. Food and money grew scarce. Napoleon had levied a fine of ten million gulden, and additional imposts on every householder. Rents were left unpaid. Shopkeepers were reluctant to sell anything but perishable foods, and these went for exorbitant prices. Hunger, terror, confusion gripped Vienna.

The city was in no mood to welcome the new opera. At the opening performance the audience comprised mostly French soldiers. Only a scattered handful of Beethoven's personal friends were present.

*Fidelio* was a failure. As *Die Zeitung für die elegante Welt* reported:

The theater was not full, and the applause was very scant. . . . The third act is very much drawn out, and the music, not effective and replete with repetitions, did not increase the idea I had formed of Beethoven's talent for vocal composition.

A distinguished visitor in that audience—Luigi Cherubini of Paris, whose works Beethoven admired so highly—echoed these unappreciative comments. The new work he called “too brusque”; he criticized Beethoven severely for his inability to write for voices, and—in a more facetious vein—said that it was impossible to guess the key in which the overture was written.

Truth to tell, the opera was too long, and proved far too difficult for both orchestra and singers. The indifference of the performers resulted in a slipshod presentation. “I lose all my desire to write anything more, if my music is to be so played!” Beethoven exclaimed.

After the work had been removed from the repertory, Beethoven's friends prevailed upon him to make extensive revisions. Reluctantly he agreed. Three entire numbers were deleted and the opera was compressed into two acts. A new overture—the *Léonore Overture No. 3*—was composed for the revised opera.

When peace returned and the Emperor came back to Vienna to be acclaimed in triumph, *Fidelio* was again presented at the Theater an der Wien, on March 29, 1806. This time it was received with greater approbation. *Die Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, which had condemned the opera so severely the preceding winter, now thought the music masterly:

It is incomprehensible how Beethoven could have squandered his beautiful music on Sonnleithner's poor text. . . . Beethoven shows what he will be able to do in the future.

But for Beethoven's own lack of tact, the opera might have enjoyed a prolonged and profitable run at the Theater an der Wien.

The opera was received with great favor, the enthusiasm increasing at each repetition, and it certainly would have become a great favorite had not the composer's evil genius intervened [wrote Joseph August Röckel, who had sung the role of Florestan]. As he was not paid a stated fee but with a share of the receipts, an advantage none before him had enjoyed, his financial circumstances would have been materially profited by it. As he had no sort of experience in theatrical matters, he estimated the receipts at a much higher figure than they actually were. He believed himself to be defrauded of his proper share, and without consulting his real friends on so delicate a subject, he hastened to Baron von Braun, the high-minded manager, and put his complaints before him.

As the Baron saw that Beethoven was excited and knew his suspicious nature, he did what he could to set aside Beethoven's distrust of officials, whose honesty he was convinced of. If there were any frauds, said the Baron, his own loss would be far greater than Beethoven's. Baron von Braun then told Beethoven that up till then only the first rank stalls and pit had been occupied, but that the galleries, he hoped, would soon be occupied.

"I do not write for the galleries!" hotly answered Beethoven.

"No?" answered the Baron. "My dear Beethoven, even Mozart was not above writing for them."

This so infuriated Beethoven that he demanded back his score. The Baron rang for an attendant and asked for it. "I am sorry," said the Baron. But without paying any attention, Beethoven snatched the score from the attendant's hand and rushed out.

## 8

In the early part of 1809 the French army once again threatened the gates of Vienna. In the suburb of Gumpendorf, the invalid Joseph Haydn heard the thunder of the cannon. "Do not fear, my children," he said gently to his servants. "Where Haydn is no harm can come to you."

He had been ill for almost a year, confined to his house. His last public appearance in Vienna, on March 27, 1808, had been at a performance of his oratorio, *The Creation*, directed by Salieri. Seated in a wheel chair he had received the gratifying homage of Vienna. After the performance friends crowded around the feeble old man. Among them were the old Clementi and Beethoven.

Haydn had come back from London, rich in honor and worldly goods—no longer, as he himself said, a “bond servant.” His music, like his life, had expanded and grown richer with the years, and the masterly symphonies written for London had crowned his life’s work. Inexhaustibly creative here and elsewhere, he could look back upon a career which had produced more than one hundred symphonies, eighty-four string quartets and innumerable other works. He could say with truth that he had been true to his vocation.

He had come back and had set to work on his last two oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, but his creative days were almost over. He belonged to another, an older age, the age before the French Revolution, before Napoleon, the age of rococo, the gilt, the elegance, the distinction of an aristocratic period. The idiom which he had first used had been carried to perfection by Mozart, and was now being guided into almost unpredictable directions by Beethoven.

During the last months of his life Haydn was a pathetic invalid, suffering from intense headaches, forgetfulness and deafness. “I have many visitors,” he once told a friend, “but it confuses me so much to talk to them that at last I scarcely know what I am saying, and only long to be left in peace.” When his mind was clear, he loved

to finger the gifts he had received—snuffboxes, medals, watches, diplomas, presented to him by the royalty of Europe. But those days of peace were few and far between. More often he was oppressed by the weakness of body and mind and became morbid. “Fled forever is my strength; I am old and weak,” was a couplet which he had printed on a card, and which he distributed to friends whenever they inquired after his health.

The first cannon shots of the French army at the gates of Vienna brought about a relapse in his condition. He knew that Vienna was once again in danger of French invasion. His strength began to ebb, and his memory grew dimmer. By the time Napoleon and the French army had penetrated into the city itself, it became apparent to Haydn’s friends that he was dying. On May 27—while the French troops were swarming in the streets of Vienna—Haydn asked his servant to carry him to his favorite clavier. There he solemnly played the Austrian anthem, which he had composed for the Emperor Francis, three times in succession as a gesture of defiance to the French.

Haydn did not live to hear of the Austrian defeat at Wagram or of the humiliating concessions which Napoleon exacted from the Emperor Francis. On the morning of May 31, 1809, he died, commending his soul “to the all-merciful Creator,” as he wrote in his will.

His funeral was simple. In the principal churches of Vienna unostentatious services were held. The French joined in these last honors—for Haydn was almost as well known in Paris as he was in Vienna. Napoleon ordered a special guard of honor to be placed at his house, and assigned many important French officers

to accompany the body. Two weeks later the *Requiem* which Mozart had composed was performed at the Schottenkirche in honor of his master.

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IN October, 1812, Napoleon began his historic retreat from Moscow. Between that date and the fatal defeat at Leipzig twelve months later was compressed his whole tragic last chapter. Everything thereafter was epilogue. Before that, those who could not win battles from him had in the hours of his triumph become his allies: Prussia and Austria, for example. The Emperor Francis had even gone so far as to bestow upon this parvenu the hand of his daughter. But now that the tide had turned, treaties were thrown to the winds. First Prussia, then Austria broke her word and joined the Great Coalition. Before long the Allies were in Paris. On the 11th of April, 1814, Napoleon abdicated. On May 2, fat Louis XVIII entered Paris.

A burden seemed lifted from the shoulders of the world. A new day seemed to have dawned. To the young it appeared as if their dream of national emancipation and a free new Europe was about to be realized. It was this spirit which had united the Germans and had brought them into battle. To the older men, more cynical perhaps, but keener, it looked as if the good old days might perhaps return.

And so, from all corners of Europe they flocked to attend the Congress held in Vienna. Emigrés who had despaired of ever seeing their country again, dispossessed aristocrats, little German princelings, Polish counts—

they turned up in the hundreds to take part in a division of the spoils. And with them, more timidly and hopefully, came those who saw in Napoleon's fall the dawn of the liberation of their people.

The Congress of Vienna! No high words, no noble phrases can conceal the ravenous greed which motivated the emissaries of the powers—England, Russia, Austria and Prussia.

They came, bringing their expensive retinues, their wives and their mistresses, their lackeys, a great deal of soldiery, so that the streets of Vienna, always crowded, now became impassable. There were 100,000 visitors—half the population of Vienna. There were not enough hostelries to receive them all; many spent their nights in their carriages. The visitors consumed so much that prices—already high—became prohibitive.

The Viennese populace gaped and admired, pleased to think that behind so much magnificence there must be wisdom too. They were curious about the goings-on, carrying whispers from mouth to mouth, pointing to this or that grandee as he passed. Never had Vienna seen such magnificence, never before such a show of nobility. There was Alexander I, Czar of Russia, with his innumerable retinue of Muscovites in their foreign garb, come to Vienna to press his claim for a good portion of Poland and, if necessary, to enforce the claim with arms. There was Frederick William III of Prussia, eager for a huge slice of Saxony, and ready to strike a bargain with his Slavic neighbor. There was poor Frederick August of Saxony, slow, fat, genial—the innocent lamb, come to Vienna to be fleeced.

The populace gaped and wondered. They admired the distinguished but simple elegance of Lord Castle-

reagh, who was here to drive a hard bargain for England. They looked with curiosity at the Frenchman Talleyrand—successively bishop, republican, speculator in real estate, imperialist, royalist, always an adventurer, gambler and opportunist—now here in Vienna to defend the interests of his country. An unbidden and somewhat disturbing guest, he looked out from seemingly sleepy eyes which, however, were as keen and penetrating as the restless brain behind them.

But most of all they marveled at their own fabulous Metternich. For around him revolved the Congress, so that one fancied it was he—and not Francis—who was Emperor of Austria. Distinguished, handsome, clever, unscrupulous, gifted in conversation, and above all else, an astute diplomat, he dominated, ruled and controlled the Congress. He had been brought up a nobleman among noblemen, and had come to detest the French revolutionary ideas. He had known Napoleon intimately, he had observed him in Paris for three years and had always harbored contempt for the parvenu—mixed with admiration for his successes. The real greatness of the man escaped him, for he had no eye for true greatness. And Napoleon, in his turn, drew an even more caustic portrait of his opponent: "He is a liar and an intriguer, an intriguer and a liar."

Emperor Francis was at his ease. He knew that his cause was in good hands when it rested with Metternich.

THE Congress danced, talked and ate. There was work to be done, but it must not interfere with the enjoyment

of the many pleasures which the gayest capital in Europe had to offer.

When the Congress danced, it was not the popular and vulgar dances of the people, but the older and more sedate steps of the aristocracy. Lord Castlereagh, for example, preferred the gigue. Most of the others asked for the majestic and sweeping polonaise, which brought the dancers with dignity and aristocratic bearing from one end of the ceremonial hall to the other, and even up and down the marble stairway. And as the men danced they could look at the most ravishing women in Vienna, to wit, the Countess Apponyi, the Countess Kohary, or the Countess Esterházy. A handful of the more adventurous visitors preferred the more brazen and audacious dance of the Viennese people, the scandalous waltz. . . .

When the Congress wished to see or be seen it promenaded on the Mölkerbastei, or strolled in the Augarten. For scandal or frothy conversation it generally foregathered at the Hotel zur Kaiserin von Österreich. When it sought diversion it visited the theaters or the palaces of the leading Viennese noblemen, which put on a festive display in honor of the occasion.

If you were of the elect all the salons were open to you. Mondays you went to the Metternichs, Thursdays to the Trautmannsdorfs, Sundays to the Zichys. If you preferred the Slavic ways you went to the salon of the incomparably charming Countess Bagration, or to the sumptuous palace of Rasoumovsky on the Donau Canal which was the scene of the most lavish ball of the entire Congress, given by Czar Alexander of Russia.

The theaters were kept busy. At the Kärntnertor you could witness a somewhat pompous allegory by Sonn-

eithner with music by Weigl, called *Die Weihe der Zukunft*; or, if you preferred the beautiful Theater an der Wien you might strike a play by the most popular contemporary dramatist, Kotzebue. At the Burgtheater, now directed by the gifted Joseph Schreyvogel, you could alternate between the severer classical diet of Schiller (much censored) and the romantic melodrama of Kotzebue. But if your taste was for the popular, and you were inclined to see and hear the *real* Vienna, you went—as so many of the Congress did—to the dismal wooden theater in the Leopoldstadt and became acquainted with Staberl. Staberl was born with the Congress. He was the offspring of the old buffoon Kasperl—meaner, more pathetic, more cunning, more thieving, more mendacious than his predecessor; in short, an expression of Vienna after the Napoleonic Wars. When he appeared on the stage with his indispensable umbrella—for Staberl was professionally an umbrella maker—the audience recognized itself and, in spite of censor, court and police, it recognized in his performance suggestions of things forbidden on the sedate stages of the more respectable Viennese theaters.

If it was music you wished, you attended the gala performances arranged as entertainment for the distinguished visitors. Beethoven's *Fidelio* was the first opera viewed in Vienna by the crowned heads. Festive performances of Spontini's *La Vestale*, Rossini's *Moisè*, or a novelty, *Die beiden Kalifen* (the work of a then young and unknown visiting composer, Giacomo Meyerbeer) were given at the opera houses. The Tonkünstler Societät, which gave concerts at the Burgtheater under the venerable Salieri, and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, newly organized by Ignaz Sonnleithner under

the patronage of the Archduke Rudolph, arranged special programs—Handel's *Samson*, for example, or the cantata which Beethoven composed especially for the opening of the Congress, *Der glorreiche Augenblick*.

You heard music, too, in the more exclusive salons—particularly in the Rasoumovsky palace where the great Schuppanzigh quartet performed the works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. And, if you were visiting the Rasoumovsky palace, or the palace of the Archduke Rudolph, you undoubtedly came to know Beethoven himself who—now acknowledged as the greatest composer in Europe—was, as Schindler wrote, “the object of general attention on the part of all foreigners.” Fiercely proud and self-assertive, Beethoven moved in this regal company with something of the air of an equal. He had once exclaimed: “I, too, am king!”

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But what of the Viennese people, who played host to this glittering galaxy of visitors? Congress danced to the tune of 220,000 gulden a day, and before it had ended it had danced away over 30 million good Viennese gulden. The Viennese had to foot that bill, through an increased levy of 50 per cent on all taxes. If the citizens of Vienna were permitted to gape at this magnificence, they were made to pay for the privilege. They paid—and remarked bitterly that of the six crowned heads (all of whom were housed at the imperial palace) the Emperor of Russia loved for all, the King of Prussia thought for all, the King of Denmark spoke for all, the King of Bavaria drank for all, the King of Württemberg ate for all, and the Emperor of Austria—paid for all.

Prince de Ligne, brilliant, cynical old man, remarked: "The people have done so much for us that we, too, must do something for them." And so, for the delight of the masses, the tower of St. Stephen's disgorged magnificent fireworks. The Augarten was the scene of a glamorous folk festival which culminated in an open-air ball—the illumination of which required two hundred lamplighters. The Prater offered open-air entertainment, and the crowd and congestion were so great that many vowed never to venture there again. There was food, beer and dancing; and not the least, there was always a public sight of visiting royalty to arouse admiration and awe.

The people, too, danced. Not the gigue, nor the polonaise, nor the minuet—but the rowdy, unrestrained and "improper" waltz. It had at one time been a peasant dance in three-quarter time; however, since peasant shoes are heavy and peasant feet clumsy, the dance was slow and almost sedate. Vienna found the waltz, took to it, held to it. Once discovered by the masses, the waltz became their favorite. The most popular melody in Martin's opera *Una Cosa rara* (the successful rival of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*) was a waltz. Toward the close of the nineteenth century all Vienna was capering to the strains of the popular song *Ach du lieber Augustin*. At the Carnival balls in the Redoutensaal, the waltz was assigned a place of first importance. Michael Kelly, the friend of Mozart, remarked: "I thought waltzing from ten at night until seven in the morning a continual whirligig, and most tiring to the eye and ears."

But in Vienna feet and heads were lighter. In Vienna the character and nature of the waltz changed rapidly. Soon it was danced at such a fast pace and with such abandon that it shocked the rest of Europe.

The dancers held up the dresses of their partners very high [wrote the poet, Ernst Moritz Arndt, after witnessing a waltz for the first time], wrapped themselves lightly in this shroud, bringing both bodies under one covering, as close together as possible, and thus the turning went on in the most indecent positions; the hand holding the dress lay hard against the breasts, pressing lasciviously at every moment; the girls, meanwhile, looked half insane and ready to swoon:

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## I I

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BUT while the Congress was conspiring and bickering, the Corsican "werewolf" escaped from Elba and landed in France on the first of March, 1815. For one hundred days all Europe and the potentates in Vienna watched with horror the resurgence of the nightmare. Then came Waterloo, on June 18—and the end of Napoleon.

Emperor Francis was now at the height of his power. Never before had Austria enjoyed the prestige and leadership which had fallen to her now. He looked out upon an enlarged and powerful empire, spreading far and wide and (as never before) assured to him and his Habsburg heirs in perpetuity. Never before, it must have seemed to him, had the fist of the Habsburgs been so mighty and threatening. And the powerful fist of the Habsburgs was named Metternich.

The fist of the Habsburgs bore down relentlessly, mightily, unerringly on anything that might for a moment threaten their security. It bore down on Austria, on Vienna, squeezing its lifeblood, pressing down on its veins, so that the body could scarcely breathe. Wherever life stirred, there it came down ponderously. In Austrian Italy, in the German lands, it crushed remorselessly the youthful movements of revolt, especially in the universities. It broke up all the student organizations and

reached out into the lecture halls. Wherever intellectual life stirred, it was strangled. Out of the universities the professors were driven—men like Bernard Bolzano, the theologian; the jurist, Leopold Rumbold; the historian, Julius Schneller. “I have no need of learned men,” caustically remarked the Emperor when warned of the possible consequences to Austria’s intellectual life. He wanted not truth, nor learning, nor light; only submission.

The diabolic efficiency of Metternich found equally efficient flunkys: police president, Count Sedlnitzky, for example, charged with the safety of Vienna. Mild mannered, gentle in appearance, bright and intelligent in a way, he performed his duties with an intense and cynical thoroughness which left nothing to be desired. Not a printed line, but was scrutinized; not a word spoken on the stage, but was reported; not a conversation at a café-house table, but was brought back to him. Spies spied upon spies; police upon police; officials upon officials.

Even innocent merriment became suspect. Ludlam’s Cave was a society of intellectual young men, founded by Castelli, the writer, which attracted the brightest of Vienna’s lights—Grillparzer, Saphir, Rellstab, Schubert and Weber. More noted for deviltry than for serious discussion of art and politics, it nevertheless aroused a vigilant police and was soon suppressed—to the amusement and consternation of the Viennese.

Every act and word of the members of the royal family found its way into Sedlnitzky’s daily reports to the Emperor. Metternich must have smiled contentedly in those days. He knew his people—and he was sure he had found the right way of ruling them. Cynical, even pessimistic—in his own way—he trusted no one save

himself, and reserved the greatest measure of his contempt for the masses who now groveled at his feet.

He did not know then—he had to wait at least thirty years longer to learn—that the man who contemns the people eventually pays a dear price for that contempt. The taut spring which he had wound up with his mighty hand was to recoil upon him with fury.

But for the time being all was safe. Here was peace of a sort, the peace of a seething caldron. Stirrings in Greece, in Piedmont, in Lombardy, Portugal, Spain, Naples. But ruthlessness swooped down to make a rapid end of these. So, at least, it seemed.

Meanwhile, the turmoil and excitement of the Congress over, Vienna settled down to its own life. If he could not read the forbidden newspapers, the Viennese read the romantic novels of Karoline Pichler; if he could not whisper of political events, he spoke of love. He drank more coffee, wine, beer; spent more time in convivial company; made love more irresponsibly, listened to music more often, and danced more passionately than ever. With his easygoing *Gemütlichkeit* he gave little thought to rebellion. Beethoven had once taken the true measure of his fellow citizens. "So long as an Austrian can get his brown beer and sausages, there will be no revolution."

The heavy air of repression became heavier with the weight of eroticism and sentimentalism. Sadness and longing and nostalgia crept into the moods of the Viennese. And since—as Metternich was to learn too late—you cannot repress life, the creative spirit broke through all this heaviness. The Viennese sang, and wrote, and dreamed of lovelier things than those he saw around him,

The Emperor's contempt for learned men was equaled by his disdain for art and the artist; and the court emulated him. Perhaps he suspected that wherever art stirred there stirred unrest and challenge and questioning. He wanted none of these. And around him, among his courtiers, there were few left who desired to pattern themselves on the Esterházys, the Lichnowskys, the Lobkowitzes, with their proud bands of skilled musicians, their own private theaters, their own composers, their own actors and singers.

Who was left to cherish the artist now? A new age had brought forth new men, a new aristocracy—men who had grown rich as a result of the wars, but had little taste for music, or poetry, or painting. The age of the patron was gone. And so the artist was left to his own devices, to find his own way as best he could, to search for his own little public which would listen to him and, perhaps, pay.

## 12

WITH the rich life of the Congress to dazzle the Viennese with its infinite variety of musical activity, few persons paid much attention to a first performance of a *Mass in F*—the work of a young and obscure composer—which took place in the Liechtenthal parish church in the fall of 1814. The composer, Franz Peter Schubert, was seventeen years old, and unknown save to a scattered few. His friends turned out for his public début as a composer, and his family as well; some of them—his brothers, Ignaz and Ferdinand, and his boyhood sweet-

heart, Therese Grob—assisted in the performance. Antonio Salieri was there too and, remembering the frequent proofs of genius which the young composer had given as his pupil, he listened attentively to the music. After the performance he embraced the boy and said: "You are my dear pupil, Franz'l, and you will do me great credit."

As Salieri listened to the music of his pupil he may have recalled his first encounter with him. Six years before—in the fall of 1808—Salieri, together with his assistant Joseph Eybler, had been called upon to choose two candidates for admission to the Imperial Convict School. This, formerly a Jesuit school, was now a preparatory academy to the University, which it adjoined. Its inclusive course of study was also designed to train young singers for the imperial chapel.

One of the three candidates was a gawky youngster of eleven, small and stocky, with round face and thick-rimmed spectacles. The long gray smock which he wore amused the other pupils present, and as he entered the hall they dubbed him a "miller's boy."

The elder Franz Schubert had brought him to the examinations only after much pleading on the part of the Liechtenthal choirmaster. Michael Holzer, who had been entrusted with his musical education, confessed after a while that he could teach him nothing more—that the boy seemed to know everything. Herr Schubert was a schoolmaster of solid parts, something of a musician, who was not inclined to make too much of the extraordinary talent of his son. Music was good enough in its way; the important thing was to train the boy to earn his living honestly. Only because the Convict School might also prepare Franz for the respectable

profession of schoolmaster did Herr Schubert yield to Holzer's pleas.

At the Convict, Franz was given trial pieces to sing; and he sang them with such assurance and skill that he was immediately accepted.

Life at the school was none too easy. The discipline was frightful, for the director, Innocenz Lang, was a martinet who brooked no nonsense. The buildings were forbidding in appearance, and the classrooms were dismal and cold. Food was poor and scarce. Schubert was often cold and hungry. He once wrote to his brother Ferdinand:

Hunger has become so pressing, that willy-nilly I must make a change. The two groschen that father gave me went in the first few days. If, then, I rely upon your aid, I hope I may do so without being ashamed (see Matt. ii, 4—so also thought I!). How about advancing me a couple of kreutzer monthly?

Yet he found here much that was pleasant: sympathy, friendship—and music. There was a good orchestra, of which one of the pupils, Joseph von Spaun, was the leader. As a member of this orchestra, Franz performed the works of Haydn, Méhul, Mozart and, above all, Beethoven, for whose second and fourth symphonies he developed an unusual affection. There was the sympathy of his masters. Ruziczka, on one occasion, exclaimed: "I can't teach him anything else, he's learned it all from God himself!" and passed Schubert on to Salieri. For Salieri, Schubert composed his first opera. "You can do anything," Salieri told him, "for you are a genius."

He found generous and sympathetic friendship as well. Shy and soft as a girl—he was always to be that—he warmed to those who understood him. And in the Con-

vict he found several who were affectionate and understanding: Anton Holzapfel, Albert Stadler, Benedict Randhartinger and, above all, Joseph von Spaun. Spaun—generous and precocious patron!—even supplied Schubert with the money which enabled him to attend performances of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Cherubini's *Medea* and Gluck's *Iphigenie in Tauris*, and on other occasions brought him reams of paper so that the young composer might pen his first opera, his first string quartet, and a fantasy for piano.

After four years, Schubert's life at the Convict came to a sudden end. His voice broke, and he was dismissed. His father then prevailed upon him to enter the St. Anna Normal School. With no little dismay, Schubert found himself following in his father's footsteps. In the autumn of 1814 he became assistant master in his father's school. The hateful occupation could not dam the irrepressible creative stream. As if to make up for the unforgivable waste of time spent in the classroom he filled page after page with music—with a rapidity that is incredible. One movement of the B-major quartet he completed in four and a half hours. The masterpiece *Gretchen am Spinnrade*—with which, as is often said, the German *Lied* was born—was composed at one sitting.

For two years he slaved at the schoolmaster's desk. Twice he hoped to emancipate himself by applying for musical posts—once in Laibach, and a second time in Weimar. But he was rejected both times. He looked around him, at the walls in the dingy little rooms, at the noisy, unkempt children whom he neither cared to nor could control, at the scribbled notebooks, at his father who knew no greater satisfaction than to rule in these miserable halls. What would become of him?

Was he, too, destined to spend the rest of his life here, in hours upon hours of senseless drudgery? To break now meant—as his father was constantly warning him—to thrust himself upon an inhospitable world which had no use for unknown musicians like him. He was no Beethoven who could exact the adulation and support of the nobility. The day when the talented musician could command an income from a generous patron was over.

The squat little schoolmaster in Liechtenthal looked at his work desk, where song was piled on song. He had already written a number of symphonies, cantatas, chamber works and what not, and he was confident of his powers. He decided that he would take his chances. He had good friends; one of them—Franz von Schober—had invited him to share his lodgings at the Landskrongasse. More than that, he had talent, youth, confidence. Tomorrow might be too late.

## 13

THE café-house Zum goldenen Rebhuhn—"At the Sign of the Golden Partridge"—occupied the ground floor of a six-story house in the Goldschmiedgasse. Since it adjoined St. Peter's Church and was not far from either the Graben or St. Stephen's Cathedral, it was easily accessible and enjoyed great popularity. Within, it was no different from the hundred or so other café-houses throughout Vienna. The interior consisted of a large, dingy room, filled with smoke, the air stale and oppressive, the furniture quite bare. In the side rooms were billiard tables for the guests, and newspapers in

many languages. The smell of thick, strong coffee was in the air.

The steady clientele enjoyed the privileges of reserved tables—the *Stammtisch*—and every evening they would be found there.

But a café-house is not judged by its furniture. In Vienna each café had its own personality—Kramer's, or Taroni's, or Leibfrost's, or Milani's (preferred by Italians). And Zum goldenen Rebhuhn meant Beethoven, Schubert and Joseph Lanner.

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It was in 1683 that the Pole, Joseph Kolschitzky—spy extraordinary to the Emperor Leopold—received, as a reward, the permission to open the first café-house in Vienna. Legend had it that in pursuit of his dangerous duties he had during the Turkish Wars been mistaken by the enemy for a Turk and had been hospitably entertained and regaled with a foreign brew. Returning to Vienna, he began to capitalize on his discovery. The defeated Turks left behind them five hundred sacks of a curious dark bean. He prevailed upon the army officers to present him with these sacks. Some time afterward Kolschitzky went from house to house carrying a tray of steaming cups of this strange, dark fluid. So great was its popularity that Kolschitzky soon decided to open a tavern, "At the Sign of the Blue Bottle."

Café-houses sprang up in numbers—not without arousing the enmity and opposition of sorely pressed distillers. Hugelmann's, in the middle of the eighteenth century, introduced a billiard table; Kramer's, in 1778, brought in newspapers and magazines, foreign as well as domestic, for the use of its clientele. By 1815 there

were more than seventy-five of these café-houses. They drew the Viennese out of the narrow confines of their homes and made possible that charming and frequently irritating expansiveness which according to some is the most gracious quality, but according to others the besetting sin of the Viennese. The café-house brought *Gemütlichkeit*, and a cup of coffee (enriched with whipped cream)—or, as some preferred, a glass of this year's wine—made for gracious living, congenial chatter, scandal, wit or sentimentality. In oppressed Vienna, where Metternich and the Habsburgs ruled and where serious talk might be fatal, this was an outlet—this, and dancing, music, love.

For the café-house epitomized Vienna. It *was* Vienna.

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Say you were living in Vienna in the winter of 1820. You had done your day's work (for good or evil), and toward midnight, perhaps after attending the Theater an der Wien, you almost mechanically betook yourself to the Goldschmiedgasse. You stopped in front of the Rebhuhn, looked in at the window. You were satisfied. The crowd was good. You saw familiar faces. There was the great composer, Beethoven, in the company of his friend, Schindler. There, the great singer, Johann Vogl. There, too, the celebrated poet, Grillparzer. The smoke appeared graciously heavy. And the murmur of voices was irresistible. Even above the noise you could hear the sound of a German dance. "Lanner is playing tonight," you said to yourself. And if you were Viennese you entered.

Joseph Lanner was already something of a celebrity. A pupil and protégé of the gifted and intemperate

Michael Pamer, he had now set up for himself. He had been born in a suburb of Vienna, St. Ulrichstrasse 20, and had literally been brought up in the café-house. When only a boy he joined the band of Michael Pamer. Then, severing connections with Pamer, he and two other musicians organized a trio which played regularly in a garden-café in the Leopoldstadt district of Vienna. At Jüngling's Café, he first made his reputation—so that soon there were rival invitations. Calls came from the Grüner Jäger, the Wallisches Bierhaus in the Prater, and finally the Rebhuhn in the Goldschmiedgasse. His music grew increasingly popular.

At the Grüner Jäger Lanner met a young musician of fifteen and was so impressed by his talent that he engaged him as the fourth member of his musical group. The boy's name was Johann Strauss—the first Johann Strauss—destined to be father of the composer of the *Blue Danube Waltz*. Born in a little beershop, Zum guten Hirten, where musicians from Linz descended from the Danube boats and stopped off to play, Johann Strauss came to know popular Viennese music from early childhood. As long as he could remember he had dreamed of becoming a café-house musician. His father had, when Johann was only a child, committed suicide, and the boy had been apprenticed to a bookbinder. He ran away from home, and was picked up in the streets by a kind musician—Polischansky—who taught him and brought him to the attention of Lanner. Lanner engaged Strauss as a violist in his small band. Before long an intimate friendship developed between them. They shared a modest room in Windmühle 18—lived together and worked together.

Lanner was young, handsome, blond haired, and he played with great feeling. He had chosen the propitious

moment in which to make his fortune. Vienna was dancing; Vienna was waltz-mad. Since Lanner was a man not only of talent, but of vision as well, he decided that he not only would play waltzes beautifully, but that he would also compose new ones.

Tonight Joseph Lanner was playing the dances of his master, Pamer. All Vienna knew them and sang them. From a corner of the room someone had taken up the tune in a beautiful baritone voice. You did not have to be told that the great baritone of the Theater an der Wien, Johann Michael Vogl, was here tonight and in a good mood.

Perhaps you were fortunate enough to know Vogl. You made your way to his table to pay him a graceful compliment on his performance of the role of Orestes in Gluck's *Iphigenie in Tauris*. He has acknowledged your compliment and has presented you to his companions: Mayrhofer, Joseph von Spaun, Franz von Schober, Johann Michael Senn, Anton Holzapfel, and an unassuming, plump little man with spectacles—Franz Schubert. . . .

VOGL was the "lord" of the group. Tall and distinguished, he was far older than any of the others. He was now in his early fifties, bearing himself like Goethe, whom he resembled. He had the air of a great man of the world to whom success came easily. He had poise, authority, charm and a forgivable amount of arrogance. What he gave he gave with the air of a prince, to whom giving is natural because he possesses so much. He was

the "grand seigneur" and belonged, as a matter of fact, to the days before the Congress. He was the admiration and the envy of his friends, and the favorite of women. If he was a dilettante—he was a dilettante of genius. In his temperament there was a strong strain of mysticism and otherworldly yearning. He was a poet too, and a linguist; he read Hebrew, Greek and Latin as easily as German.

Johann Mayrhofer was the restless romantic poet of modest talent but vast longings—a small poet with a great deal of *Weltschmerz*. He was beak-nosed like an eagle, and equally proud. Gloomy and maudlin by turns, he was at odds with himself and with others. He was a slave to moods, a victim of impulses. At one time—during the Polish revolution, when the news of the fall of Warsaw reached him—he attempted to drown himself in the Danube. In Metternich's Vienna he became an official in the censor's bureau after having been in turn theological student and tobacconist. A rebel by nature, he tormented himself at night for his daily sins. He lived in his poet's world, his head always in the clouds. His poverty was appalling, his clothing frayed and threadbare. But he seemed oblivious of hardships. Often, in fact, he preferred a seat in the Kärntnertor or the Theater an der Wien, where a favorite opera was being performed, to eating. He lived entirely for the poetry which he scribbled endlessly and for the music which he loved. The verses he wrote combined classical stiffness with romantic vagueness. They would have perished long ago but for the fact that a quiet little man who was his friend had set them to music.

Joseph von Spaun, court advocate, schoolmate of Schubert at the Convict, as generous and noblehearted now as in the first year Schubert had known him. . . .

Handsome Franz von Schober, still lordly-bright and romantic, art connoisseur and collector, actor, poet, painter, gallant lover, a restless, wandering nature, destined to lead an unhappy life, stranded and alone. . . . Johann Michael Senn, turbulent poet of revolt, also at war with his age. . . .

And Franz Schubert. Strangely enough—*he* was the fixed star, the center. All revolved breathlessly around him. He was quiet, almost motionless. He held them together with his strength. One sometimes suspects that they recognized this great quiet strength in him—for in spite of all his seeming weakness and softness, they, the self-willed romantics and egoists, driven here and there by impulses little understood even by themselves, sought strength and certainty in him. Were they not the epitome of the unrest that was Vienna, the alternation of turbulence and despair, moodiness and gaiety, thinking and feeling? And was he not the only one of them who could gather up all their emotions and give them expression? Only through him did Vogl's singing, Mayrhofer's poetry, and the longing and unrest of the others acquire meaning!

"*Ich singe wie der Vogel singt.*"—"I sing as the bird sings"—Schubert might have said with Goethe's minstrel. And he might have added: "*Ich lebe wie der Vogel lebt.*"—"I live as lives the bird."

He had refused to go back to his dismal schoolroom, and though his father's strong words had rankled, he had persisted. And his father's words had been fulfilled. He had in these years earned little enough; but for the generosity and open heart of his friends he would have starved to death. Only one position had been offered to him in this period. In the summer of 1818 the Hungarian

Count Esterházy had hired him as a music tutor, had taken him to the summer estate at Zelész, and had paid him two gulden a lesson. But Schubert soon learned that he had exchanged one wretched servitude for another. Unlike his more generous predecessors, Esterházy kept his hired musicians at a distance—housed them, as a matter of fact, with his servants. In his own fashion, Schubert was happy here, but his letters betrayed more than once that he preferred the insecurity and sociability of Vienna to the assured comforts of a servant's post in Zelész.

Although I am so happy here [he wrote to his brother Ferdinand], and my health is good, and all the people about me are good and kind, I shall rejoice when the word of command comes, "To Vienna! To Vienna!" Yes, dear Vienna, within your narrow limits is contained all that is dearest and loveliest, and only seeing you again will still the longing within me. . . .

He was back in Vienna late in the autumn of 1818, and continued his birdlike existence. If his friends did not have much in their own right, they were never niggardly in sharing what they did possess. He wandered from place to place, now lodging with Spaun, now with Schober, and at this moment living in the dismal and unventilated quarters of Mayrhofer in the Wipplingerstrasse. Wherever he might be—in the café-house, in the street, in some distressing lodging—his fancy, restless and miraculous, was always creating. His tireless brain knew only one master—*work*. He would get up early in the morning and write from six until one, oblivious of everything around him, of friends, of words, of food, of noise. And that is what his friends marveled at most. *They* groped, and spun their imaginary dreams, and barely got things down on paper. But here—in Franz Schubert—was no

division, no distraction. Only the single oneness of creation.

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## 15

IN their own dim past, in their native hills and valleys, Europeans were everywhere discovering stores of song, whose richness amazed them and whose naturalness and simplicity inspired them. In Scotland, in England, as well as along the banks of the Rhine, they were gathered by many hands—by Bishop Percy, Walter Scott, Johann Gottfried Herder. The older as well as the younger generation of romantic poets drew upon them and were refreshed by them. Burns and Scott, Herder, Goethe and Schlegel, Heine and Wilhelm Müller recreated them.

The songs were the songs of the people, stemming—so some believed—from the communal life of common men and women. Preserved in homely speech they revealed rich native elements. And since deep national pride had been awakened in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, men set out to uncover these songs and ballads, to recover, so to speak, their national voice, to find in them an expression of their *Volksseele*. In Germany, Herder, Bürger and Goethe absorbed and transformed these songs and ballads. In Vienna Franz Schubert was their musical voice.

Schubert himself was the first and, at the same time, the greatest singer of these songs. The roots of his songs are to be found in the authentic poetry of the people, in that simplicity and naturalness which are its startling characteristics. His great artistry—like that of Burns,

Goethe and Heine—rendered them anew so that, though they are the creations of a unique, individual genius, they have never for a moment lost their touch with the people nor their dependence on popular forms.

With Schubert too the “song” (the *Lied*) became autonomous—freeing itself from dependence on the opera, acquiring its texture and spirit from the words it was expressing, achieving its own independent place in art. His genius seized upon the poem and translated it immediately into musical terms. Music was to be true to every phrase and emotion in the poem. The accompaniment was to add meaning to the song, setting its mood, accentuating and dramatizing it: In *Gretchen am Spinnrade*—with which the *Lied* was born—one could hear the whirring of the spinning wheel; in *Der Leiermann*, the monotonous tune of the hand organ; in *Der Erlkönig*, the pulse and stress of the storm; in *Der Doppelgänger*, the mystery of the shadow. . . .

Because he was creating a new art form—Beethoven’s cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* contains, after all, only the faintest suggestion of the Schubert *Lied*—Schubert’s efforts were met with general indifference and misunderstanding. Singers would not perform his songs because they were not sufficiently melodious, in the way in which Mozart and Beethoven were melodious. Publishers would not print them because the accompaniments were too difficult, and they would therefore find no ready buyers.

And so, although by 1820 he had composed more than five hundred works in every branch of musical composition, Franz Schubert was known to only a small circle of friends. A single performance of one lonely song, which had taken place in 1819, could hardly bring him to the notice of the outside world.

BUT in 1820 came the first promise of recognition—and not for his songs in which he was the incomparable genius, nor for his chamber works into which he poured some of his richest inspiration, but for his operas, always his weakest medium. Johann Vogl had prevailed upon the Kärntnertor-theater to commission Schubert to set to music a play entitled *Die Zwillingbrüder*. It was a ridiculous text drawn from the French, full of incongruities; but here was the long-awaited opportunity to reveal his powers.

The first performance of *Die Zwillingbrüder* took place on June 14. The Schubert clique was on hand to witness what it felt would be the turning point in the career of their friend. Appropriately, Johann Vogl was assigned to sing the major role of the twin brother.

At the first performance [wrote Anselm Hüttenbrenner] I sat beside Schubert in the last row of the gallery. He was quite pleased that the operetta was being received with loud applause. All the solos and scenes in which Vogl took part were clapped vigorously. At the end, Schubert was called, but he refused to come before the curtain because he had on an old shabby overcoat. I took off my black tail-coat and tried to persuade him to put it on, and to present himself to the audience, which would have been a good thing for him. But he was too irresolute and bashful. As the calls became more and more insistent, the producer at last had to appear before the curtain and announce that Schubert was not in the house.

After the performance Schubert and his friends celebrated the occasion with several bottles of Nessmüller wine at Lenkay's inn in the Liliengasse. The wine warmed them, unloosed their tongues, caused their hopes to expand. Schubert, they thought, was at last on his way

to recognition. After the success of the *Zwillingsbrüder*—for the applause had been generous that night—he must surely be accorded the fame he deserved.

But *Die Zwillingsbrüder* was no great success; and it did little to improve Schubert's position as a composer. If the applause at the first performance was plentiful, the critics did not echo this enthusiasm in their reports. The Vienna correspondent of the *Dresdener Abendzeitung* wrote:

The Hofoper gave a little play with songs, *Die Zwillingsbrüder*, adapted from the French. A young composer made his début in public with the music composed for the book. I would warn the talented young man that too much praise is unwholesome. For the public received the operetta as if it were a masterpiece, which, of course, it is not. Certainly, there is evidence in his composition of thoroughness and well thought-out sequences of new themes. But just as light frivolous music is not suitable to illustrate heroic subjects, so his music is far too grave and exalted to illustrate this very frivolous subject. Generally speaking, I am of the opinion that this young composer (he calls himself Schubert) will employ his talents more happily in the heroic than in the comic vein.

*Der Wiener Sammler* called the music "a pretty trifle."

It shows signs of a mastery of the art of composition, for the style of the opera is undoubtedly pure and sure, and proves that the composer is no novice in harmony. But many of the melodies are somewhat antiquated, and many unmelodious.

*Die Zwillingsbrüder* was a failure, as Schubert and his friends realized after several performances. At the third and fourth presentations the attendance was thinner, the applause more sparse. After the sixth performance it was removed from the repertoire of the theater.

Schubert's spirit, oppressed by the collapse of this hope, was soon buoyed by new prospects. The competitive Theater an der Wien—having heard of the Kärntner commission—engaged him to prepare a musical score for *Die Zauberharfe*.

The performance took place a few weeks after the failure of the *Zwillingsbrüder*, on August 19, 1820. Once again Schubert's hopes soared high. Once again they were fated to sink.

The melodrama, *Zauberharfe*, with music by Herr Schubert, was rather coldly received [reported the correspondent of the *Leipziger Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*]. A few astonishingly effective decorations did not atone for the dull, too monotonous subject, the treatment of which was without interest. The composition here and there showed talent, but as a whole it lacked evidence of the experience which can weld material together. It is much too long, ineffective and fatiguing. The harmonies are too sudden, the instrumentation overloaded, the chorus tame and wanting in strength.

Such consolation as Schubert could derive after the failure of his two works for the stage came to him from his first major publication. On March 7, 1821, Sonnleithner arranged a special charity concert at the Kärntner-theater, and Johann Vogl was one of the participating artists. Vogl sang *Der Erlkönig*—it was the first time that *Der Erlkönig* had been sung on a public platform. The reception given the song was thunderous; Vogl was compelled to repeat it. Inspired by this success, Sonnleithner decided to issue several of Schubert's songs, *Der Erlkönig* among them. A hundred subscribers were found—and Schubert's first important published work was issued in Vienna.

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## 17

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THE Fröhlich home made no pretension to being a salon, but it attracted whatever of talent there was in Vienna. Perhaps because it was so informal, so charming and so free from stiffness. More likely because the hostesses were unaffected, enthusiastic and highly talented. For this was

a most extraordinary household. Each of the four sisters was gifted in her own way: Anna, the oldest, dark and beautiful like an Italian, was a musician; Barbara was both musician and painter; the youngest, Josefine, was already making her mark as soprano at the Kärntner-tor; and the most beautiful, vivacious and turbulent of the four—Kathi—was a passionate lover of music and literature. There was nothing of the bluestocking about them. They kept house, cooked, knitted—and sang. They loved all the good things in life; they loved the arts; and they loved good company.

Music was the tie which bound them and their friends in close intimacy. It was here in these modest rooms that Schubert felt most at ease, responding unaffectedly to the warmth which surrounded him. Hour after hour he sat listening to music, as Kathi recalled many years later, “folding his hands in deep emotion as if in prayer, and pressing them to his mouth,” sitting there “as if in ecstasy.” Or he would be coaxed out of his silent corner and brought to the piano. Simply, unaffectedly he would play—whatever he had composed the day before—play for hours at a stretch until the evening became a *Schubertiade*, a “Schubert evening.” Or he would sit on the sofa and confide—he who was so chary of words—to Kathi: “Today I have something with which I believe I have really been successful.” And he brought forth his songs, *Gott ist mein Hirt*, *Gott in der Natur*, or a favorite Ländler or a waltz.

Anselm Hüttenbrenner has recorded his impression of Schubert at this time:

His appearance was not very striking. He was short, somewhat corpulent, with a full round face. Because of his near-sightedness, he always wore eye-glasses which he never removed, not even while sleeping. He never con-

cerned himself with his dress, and he detested going into society because it necessitated careful dressing. In general, he found it impossible to discard his soiled frock coat for a black suit. . . . His voice was weak, but very agreeable. When Schubert would sing his own *Lieder*, in the company of musicians, he generally accompanied himself. When others sang them, he would generally sit in a corner of the room, or even in another room and listen quietly.

Vogl would sometimes join the Fröhlich household, and Mayrhofer and Schober. Then there would be no end of gaiety and laughter and singing. Schubert would improvise, drift into an impromptu, and as suddenly slip into his Viennese dances—for he was one of the creators of the Viennese waltz—and the rest would dance. Hilarity and extravagant comedy succeeded dancing, Schubert parodying Italian opera, and Mayrhofer reciting epic poetry in mock-heroic style. Schober usually played the buffoon.

One evening in 1820 the poet Franz Grillparzer joined the group. He had met the Fröhlichs at Geymüller's, and had been attracted by Kathi. Since he was the most promising dramatist in Vienna, he was warmly welcomed in the Fröhlich sitting room. Fateful meeting of Austria's greatest song writer and Austria's greatest dramatist!

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Grillparzer was not handsome, but he was graceful and well above middle height. His pale, sad face was intelligent and betrayed depth of feeling. His head was crowned by rich, blond hair.

He had already gone through much. His father had died in 1809 when he was barely seventeen and he had been burdened with the support of his mother and three younger brothers. He had become a private tutor to the son of Count Seillern. After a severe illness he had suc-

ceeded in obtaining a small official post which he detested with all his heart. All that time he had been writing plays and poems. Schreyvogel, struck by one of his tragedies, encouraged him to complete it. *Die Ahnfrau* was produced at the Theater an der Wien in 1817 and, after the third performance, proved sensationally successful. Grillparzer himself has described the first performance:

At last came the day of the first performance. I could not be induced to let my name appear on the play-bills. All the street-corners contained placards with the announcements of *Die Ahnfrau*, a tragedy in five acts, but without the name of the author. This in itself was not a good omen. The theater was half-empty and the cash receipts were poor. The performance, though admirable, made a most dismal impression upon me. I sat as if in a bad dream, and I then and there resolved never more to attend a performance of any of my plays. . . . The members of my family behaved most strangely. I myself unconsciously recited the entire play in a low voice. My mother, turning her gaze away from the stage every now and then, exclaimed again and again: "For heaven's sake, Franz, calm yourself; you will get sick." While my little brother who sat on the other side of her, prayed incessantly for the success of the play. What added to the disagreeableness of the scene was that there sat among the few spectators on the bench directly behind us a respectable looking old gentleman who of course did not know me and who, although apparently interested in the performance, could not refrain from exclaiming frequently: "Too gross, altogether too gross!"

*Die Ahnfrau* was no great work of art. Its parentage was easily recognizable in its use of perverted romantic horror, of the robber theme, its suggestion of incest. The motive of "fate," which, in the figure of an ancestral ghost, visits the sins of fathers upon children, had been made fashionable by Zacharias Werner and Adolph Müllner. Schiller's *Robbers* was responsible for Grillparzer's outlaw. What saved the play from complete banality was the poetic gift which breathed some life into the dead bones of the story. *Die Ahnfrau* was a promise

rather than a fulfillment. But not even the intellectual immaturity of the author could conceal his indisputable poetic gifts.

The play aroused the interest of Count Stadion, who appointed Grillparzer theatrical poet at a salary of 2,000 gulden. Grillparzer's poetic genius was released. He grew rapidly, and in the following year he saw his second play, *Sappho*, produced at the Burgtheater.

*Sappho* [Schreyvogel wrote in his diary shortly after the first performance] is a great success, especially in the first three acts, and has been received with altogether extraordinary applause. At the end there was no stemming it, and the author was called for. The young man's fortune is made.

And Gressinger wrote to Böttiger:

I must write again to inform you of the wonderful reception given to Grillparzer's *Sappho*. It brought down the house. At the end of the third act, which ended in such an interesting manner, the clapping and calls for the author lasted during the whole interval, so that one couldn't hear the music. What a marvelous effect is gained with little scenery and only a few characters! The author, partly from modesty and partly because he is a clerk in the Civil Service, would not appear before the curtain.

Grillparzer was now definitely the dramatist of the hour. Prince Metternich asked him to his palace, exclusive literary and social circles followed suit. He was welcomed to the celebrated salon of Karoline Pichler, the daughter of Maria Theresa's maid of honor, and wife of a government official. The author of sentimental novels—*Agathocles* was widely read—she made up for a limited talent by a gracious presence and a passion to emulate the grand manners of the *salonnières* of the *ancien régime*. Her salon—the famous "Blue Room" in the Alser Vorstadt—was known throughout Europe. It received Franz Grillparzer with no little ceremony.

Never shall I forget the evening and favorable impression that his appearance made [Karoline Pichler wrote in her memoirs]. Grillparzer cannot

be called handsome, but he has a slight figure, is above average height, has beautiful eyes which give his pale features an intellectual cast, and a mass of ash-blond curls. One would notice with admiration such an exterior even if one did not know the name of its owner, and his possession of a highly cultivated mind and noble nature. Everyone at our little gathering . . . was equally impressed and the poet must have felt himself here in congenial company, for he came afterwards to see us more and more frequently during the winter. . . . Grillparzer from the first seems to have been at home with us. He came as our guest to dinner nearly every Tuesday and Wednesday and often on Sundays, and stayed sometimes whole afternoons and evenings playing duets with my daughter. He played the piano very well and improvised with talent and taste. His gifted mind, his simplicity and frankness won our hearts and the attraction seemed to be mutual, for he responded warmly to our friendly overtures. He told us about his young days, confided to us his plans, and many of his little poems had their origin in his visits to our house.

But with Grillparzer the sweet fruit of success seemed always destined to turn to bitterness. He was pursued by a "fate" much more malignant, if less melodramatic, than that which haunted the characters of his plays. That fate was none other than a strain of insanity, which in 1817 drove one brother to commit suicide and two years later brought a similar doom to his mother. The knowledge that his family tree was cankered and fears for his own future poisoned his life.

He was also stifled by the arid intellectual atmosphere in Vienna. He fretted at the oppressiveness, at the censorship, at the mental exhaustion he saw everywhere around him. Many years before, when he was barely nineteen, he had set down his revulsion in a note which, if it had ever come under the censor's eye, would have ended his career at once:

I desire to escape from this land of misery and despotism, and its comrade, stupid dull-wittedness, where merit is measured by the yardstick of pedigree . . . where reason is a crime, and enlightenment the most dangerous enemy of the state; where an imbecile on the throne and an ass at his side are

content at best to encourage mediocrity; but extirpate whatever possesses distinction, because they are afraid of being excelled. Nature, why did you allow me to be born in this very land?

And so pride in the potentiality of his country mingled within him with shame and despair at what he saw around him. He was until the last a proud Austrian, a lover of Vienna, Viennese through and through, knowing every street and nook of the city, the history of whose past appeared to him affronted by the grim present.

The dichotomy of living and creating—of the life of the imagination and of everyday experience—became more intense within him. He had said in Sappho: "*Und Leben ist ja doch des Lebens höchster Ziel*"—"For living is the loftiest goal of life." But like so many of his romantic contemporaries, he found living difficult indeed, for life seemed to belie his fondest dreams. Creation meant experience; it meant reality. Yet when he sought to interpret and transmute experience into art—well, there was always the censor.

After his mother's death he had left Vienna and gone to Italy. In Rome, looking at the Coliseum, he had come, like so many others, to reflect on the contrast between the ancient and the modern, and he had written a short poem, *On the Campo Vaccino*, the tone of which was bitterly antipapal. The poem, unfortunately for him, was published; his Majesty, the Emperor, was apprised of the indignity, and Grillparzer was refused an appointment as royal librarian.

If he could not write of the present, he would transmute the past. The creative urge within him was too great to be repressed by the times or the environment. He had only recently completed a magnificent trilogy on the theme of Jason and Medea, into which he had poured

his own sense of defeat and pessimism and his revulsion at his age. The Golden Fleece became for him a symbol of youth's and his own generation's false delusions and enchantment; the acquisition of the fleece through fraud, a bitter commentary on the ways of his age. Medea and Jason were the embodiment of the tragic changes wrought in two eager, passionate souls by that lust. The old legend was weighted with the sadness of the present. It was not merely Medea, but Grillparzer himself, who at the end of the play poignantly remarked:

*Was ist der Erde Glück—Ein Schatten!*

*Was ist der Erde Ruhm—Ein Traum!*

What is this earthly blessing—a shadow!

What is earthly glory—a dream!

He might, like so many of his fellow romantics, have succumbed to paralysis, to the conviction that a man could do nothing to change his or other men's state. But his rebellious nature saved him from such a fate. Despite revulsion, occasional despair, sorrow, the light of hope broke through. He who had written that the goal of life was living came to recognize the dignity of man and the great powers within him of directing the destiny of humanity. Metternich and the Emperor Francis might crush the people now; but it could not be long before the masses, in turn, would rise and crush their oppressors.

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Like Schubert, Grillparzer preferred the gatherings at the Fröhlichs'. The musical life he found there quieted him. His mother had been a talented pianist, and he himself had taken to music even before he had begun the writing of verse. He loved to extemporize: A poem or an

etching would set him off on a musical journey. For Kathi he had set to music Horace's ode *Integer Vitae* and Heine's *Du schönes Fischer mädchen*. His mother was a Sonnleithner, a member of one of the most musical families in Vienna. For Grillparzer that meant music, literature and the friendship of men of genius. He had often seen Beethoven, had met him for the first time when he was fourteen, and two years later they had lived in the same house in Heiligenstadt.

Music itself seemed to him the purest, the most disinterested of the arts, summing up in itself a complete cosmos, *Weltalls Summe*. Beethoven and Mozart were to him the apotheoses of musical creation.

To these he was now to join the name of Schubert.

In Schubert's music he found expressed his own romantic yearning, his fevers and restlessness, his hopes and despair. He who was so passionately devoted to music himself could not help responding to Schubert's songs.

And so at the Fröhlichs' he sat and listened. When the others danced he danced too, because he was a lover of dancing. When they jested, he sat next to Kathi (whom he loved, and in whose life he was soon to be something of a tragic destiny). But his moments of highest gratification came when Schubert sat at the piano, played his piano pieces or accompanied himself in his own songs.

NEW friends succeeded old ones. Schober might be in Breslau—unhappy, restless and nostalgic as ever; Spaun, in Lemberg—on dry official duties. But the Schubert evenings held sometimes in the Gundelhof house of

Ignaz Sonnleithner, at other times at the Fröhlichs', Mohn's or Bruckmann's, continued.

It was at the Mondscheinhaus, Auf der Wieden, from the back yard of which one could view the town as well as the neighboring hills, that Schubert was seen most frequently after 1821. Here lived the young painter, Moritz von Schwind. The friendship between him and Schubert, which began here in 1821, was terminated only by Schubert's death.

When he first met the composer Schwind was an engaging youth of seventeen who had recently abandoned the study of science for painting. Nervous, exuberant and overexcitable, he possessed an unusually attractive personality, reminiscent in a lesser way of Shelley's. He was very handsome, lively, full of enthusiasm and faith in himself and in his art. His friends called him the "Cherub." Devoted, like so many of his friends, to music, he drew close to Schubert and was in turn affected and matured by Schubert's genius. The charming, if unpretentious Mondscheinhaus became the favorite meeting place of Schubert's friends, especially when Schubert himself moved to the Wieden within a few paces of Schwind's home. Thus they virtually lived together, worked together, dreamed together. "He is my sweetheart," Schubert often laughingly said of Schwind, "for he can penetrate into the inmost recesses of my heart."

Schubert, Grillparzer, Schwind—the three most gifted voices of Austrian romanticism, of its music, letters and painting!

In himself Schwind embodied both the charm and the contradictions of romanticism: exhilaration and depression, love of life with yearning for death. To Schober he wrote in a moment of great joy:

I do not want to die, but I am often conscious of the bliss of escaping from the shackles of the body. I long for existence, quiet and self-contained, and I am aflame with yearning, and overflowing with love. Where is the heart, where are the arms which will open to soothe and free me?

Some years before, Vienna had welcomed the high priests of German romanticism with enthusiasm: Friedrich Schlegel, who had preached freedom of the imagination, of love, of the individual and art, and had immortalized his wife, Dorothea, in an amorphous ecstatic novel, *Lucinde*; his brother, August Wilhelm, who had rediscovered for Germans Shakespeare and the genius of Greece and Spain. And Zacharias Werner, mystic, dramatist, revivalist and buffoon; Adam Müller, the political philosopher. These and others had left their indelible mark on the generation following 1815. Especially on Grillparzer, Schwind and Schubert.

For Schwind they meant the imaginative recreation of the Middle Ages, the rediscovery of Germanic heroism—the *Nibelungenlied* and the troubadours and knight-hood. In his paintings he embodied, as did so many others of his generation, the romantics' passionate if deluding dream of a greater, nobler, simpler past. And while he illuminated New Year's cards for a living, he painted for himself *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Käthchen von Heilbronn*, *The Dream of the Knight*, illustrated *Der Erbkönig* and sketched portraits of his intimate circle.

What must have drawn Schubert to him was the budding creative genius, as yet imperfect, which despite hardship and poverty demanded expression. And Schubert—what must he have meant to the younger man? Schwind, who had scarcely found himself, who was "always in ferment," drifting from one master to another, how could he fail to be guided and heartened by the

creative genius whose every effort was fulfillment, by the irrepressible and perfect and natural self-realization of the older man?

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## 19

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It was only when Schubert returned alone to his rooms after an evening with his friends at the Mondscheinhaus, Zum grünen Anker or Bogner's café that desolation came upon him with renewed force. Those mad, care-free evenings with his friends were, after all, only a temporary respite. They could never entirely dissipate the heaviness of spirit which now weighed him down.

His letters and his work betrayed an ever-increasing gloom.

I am feeling just now the unhappiest and most miserable of men [he wrote to his friend, Kupelwieser, in 1823]. Health will never be right again and I am in despair at things going from bad to worse. Picture to yourself, I say, a man whose most brilliant hopes have come to nothing, to whom fortune, love and friendship give little but pain and anguish . . . then ask yourself if such a condition does not represent a miserable and unhappy man. . . . Each night when I go to sleep I hope never again to awaken, and every morning reopens the wounds of yesterday.

Some time later he wrote a short poem symptomatic in its bitterness of his growing despair:

Youth of our time! Your former power has fled.  
The strength of countless nations ebbs away.  
None rises up to point a better way.  
Valour is lost and inspiration dead.

My days are spent in sorrow's leaden ban,  
Sterile and poor, a victim of this age,  
Which shrouds in dust our golden heritage,  
And brings no greatness unto any man.

The folk, grown old and feeble, wander by,  
 Their youthful prowess but a vanished dream,  
 And even poesy no more esteem,  
 Its golden glories turn to mockery.

O power of Art! The sacred task is thine!  
 Hold up thy mirror to the nobler past!  
 Thy strength alone can sorrow's strength outlast,  
 And mock its triumph over our decline.

Schubert had not forgotten the sting of his two failures at the Kärntnertor and the Theater an der Wien in 1820. These failures were followed by others equally humiliating. He had composed some exquisite incidental music to Wilhelmine von Chezy's *Rosamunde*, performed in 1823, only to meet with rebuffs again, to be told by one critic that he showed "originality . . . but, unfortunately, bizarrerie also." He had composed an opera, *Alfonso und Estrella*, the score of which he brought to Karl Maria von Weber for criticism and advice. Weber—who had previously been told that Schubert had made disparaging comments about *Euryanthe*—glanced hurriedly over the manuscript and told Schubert acidly that "first puppies and first operas should be drowned."

Nor could Schubert easily forget that he, the composer of several hundred works, was an unknown figure in Vienna, denied even the barest essentials of life, dependent on the generosity of his friends. After 1821 the burden of illness was added to that of poverty.

But neither illness nor despair could quench him. While he was in a hospital, tortured by pain, early in 1823 he began the settings for *Die schöne Müllerin*. It was in the midst of frustration and spiritual anguish during the latter part of the previous year that he had set down the deathless springtime of music which was to be known as the *Unfinished Symphony*. Even toward the very end of his

days, with death close to him, his creative impulse waxed in strength and his genius grew in richness and profundity. Like Mozart's, his last years were to be his most abundant ones; like Beethoven's, his last years were to produce some of his most profound utterances. Death wove its themes through his last works—*Die schöne Müllerin*, *Die Winterreise*, the last quartets, and the posthumously published sonata for piano in B-flat major—in a pattern that added tenderness to a depth of sadness never before expressed.

Art is affirmation of life. The very act of creation is a defiance of defeat and despair. Art is a negation of death, and of that paralysis with which a sense of the futility of things would bind the creator. By an act of artistic creation the stanchest pessimist challenges whatever regnant power he has conjured up as inexorable. And that is why the truthful word of Schubert, Grillparzer or Schwind is not to be found in those moments when, overcome by impotence and the indifference of the world, by tyranny, poverty and oppression, they believed themselves ruthlessly defeated by their destiny. But in their work is found a denial of that destructive force. For they affirm that man can liberate himself and others by *doing*, by *acting*.

The romantics were, like Schwind, sometimes "half in love with death." But neither in Schubert nor in Grillparzer nor in Schwind is there a sense of defeat, of surrender.

Like Mozart and Beethoven, Schubert spoke most eloquently at the end of his days. There was no sense of exhaustion—as if the springs of *his* imagination could ever run dry! On the contrary, it seemed that there was so much to say, and so little time in which to say it, that Schubert wished he could run on and on. Does not one

sense that desire to communicate *everything* in the immortal lengths of the C-major symphony, as one does in the long movements of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony or of the last quartets?

If there was no sense of defeat, there was, however, the sense of sadness, of loss, of estrangement. Can it be a mere accident that the two great cycles which occupied him between 1821 and 1827—*Die schöne Müllerin* and *Die Winterreise*, both by Wilhelm Müller—deal so intensely with unrequited love and with death? How they alternate between rapture and dark despair; how lovingly they—and Schubert in them—dwell on death and eternal rest!

Love and death.

He had loved Therese Grob, but that had been many years before. He had also been in love with Countess Esterházy. Marriage was out of the question. Poor, and frequently ill, what had he to offer? Within his circle of friends, however, he found partial fulfillment. To them he meant everything. How they rejoiced when he was back with them after an absence!

"Schubert is here!" Schwind wrote to Schober.

"Schubert is here again!" Johanna Lutz informed Kupelwieser.

"Schubert is back!" the poet Eduard Bauernfeld noted in his diary. And he added: "Schubert has the right mixture of the ideal and the real. All the earth appears to him to be beautiful."

IN the years between 1821 and 1823 the battle of German romantic opera was once again waged with vehemence

on the Viennese stage. For a time it seemed as if the good old days of operatic feuds had come back, the struggles of Gluck and Metastasio, Mozart and Salieri.

The standard-bearers of the opposing sides were now Karl Maria von Weber and Gioacchino Rossini.

Rossini had been brought to Vienna by the Italian impresario Barbaja, who now held sway at both the Kärntnertor and the Theater an der Wien. His Italian company, recruited mostly from the San Carlo at Naples, was setting the Viennese agog with Italian tunes. "So long as I have money for the Italian opera," wrote the philosopher Hegel to his wife, "I shall not leave Vienna."

Fat, lazy, genial, gifted Rossini walked the streets of Vienna in triumph. At the Kärntnertor-theater were performed *Zelmira*, *Ricciardo*, *La Gazza ladra*—all products of his fluent pen. Even Metternich took to the seductive airs which Vienna was humming.

For four months Rossini remained in Vienna. Shortly before his departure a benefit night was arranged for him at the Kärntnertor. Viennese admirers—several thousands of them—swarmed outside the theater. Rossini, who had invited the entire cast to supper, heard of the crowd gathered outside the theater and decided to arrange an impromptu concert on the balcony. Arias from *Elisabetta* and *Zelmira* were sung by the leading members of the cast. Rossini himself joined by singing the *Largo al factotum* from *The Barber of Seville*. The music went on until two in the morning.

Then, loaded with praise and money, Rossini returned to his country—but not before he had composed for his hosts a parting song, *Addio ai Viennesi*.

Barbaja was an astute businessman. He could not let national fervor stand in the way of full houses. He had

heard of the startling success of a German opera, *Der Freischütz*, in Berlin, and hastened to commission another work in the same vein from the composer. More than that, he invited the composer to come to Vienna for the production of *Der Freischütz* in February, 1822.

The loyalties of the town were divided. The German party was all for Weber and German romantic opera; but an even greater portion was for the Italians and Rossini. But Barbaja knew that it was good business to have both factions dependent upon one theatrical enterprise.

With great fanfare and much trouble, *Der Freischütz* opened at the Kärntnertor on March 7. The town went wild; temporarily at least, the Italian faction was silenced. Rossini, who was present at one of the performances, grimaced and said that Weber's music gave him the colic, and many of his admirers echoed his displeasure. But young Vienna, brought up on Schlegel, Tieck and Novalis hailed the triumph of German opera. What Beethoven had striven for in *Fidelio*, what Schubert had failed to do, Weber had now realized. *Der Freischütz* ran for fifty performances.

Weber was never fortunate in his poets. *Der Freischütz* was no exception. The German writer, Friedrich Kind, had provided him with a book in which solid merit was mingled with the spurious—not the least of the latter being supernatural, diabolic elements. But from this text, with its solid Germanic qualities, Weber created a new species of folk opera which, like Schubert's songs, exploited native German folk music, borrowed from German traditions and popular superstitions, and was filled with the love of landscape and forest and village. Great as was the talent of Rossini, he was epigonous; he

worked upon older materials and themes which had been fashionable in Mozart's day and which had survived merely by the grace of a rich, melodic fancy. But this stuff of Weber's was fresh and stirring.

Weber's new opera, *Euryanthe*, composed especially for Vienna, was produced at the Kärntnertor on October 25, 1823. Even his genius could not completely hurdle the obstacles placed in his way by a clumsy and untalented librettist. Wilhelmine von Chezy (she wrote the text of *Rosamunde* for Schubert) had little poetic gift, but plenty of undisciplined imagination. She thrust into her pedestrian lines all the pseudoromantic claptrap then in fashion: medieval chivalry, courtly love, seduction, tried fidelity—in short, all that sorrowful make-believe which was to burden opera for many years to come.

The wonder is that Weber succeeded in creating light in all this chaos. *Euryanthe* was no *Freischütz*. It lacked its predecessor's strong folk element, its original powers. But it was the work of a man of genius. The past, which his magnificent instrumentation evoked, is one that only Keats could have transmuted into poetry. Weber's music, like the music of Keats's verse, gave it that enchantment of distance and mystery, of something seen through a half-mist or in a dream which—for the moment at least—makes the dreamworld of romanticism acceptable to us. There are here anticipations of themes and moods to be heard later in *Lohengrin*; as if the music were groping to startle the mind into a perception of incommunicable worlds.

And the passionate young romantics responded to Weber's dreamworld with fervor and rallied around the standard-bearer of the new imagination. They listened to the sounds of the hunting horn and they warmed to

this evocation of the past. They found in this music an affirmation of the German soul. This was German opera, the pioneer stones for which had been laid by Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven.

"I am glad, I am glad," wrote Beethoven to Weber. "For this is the way German opera must get the upper hand of the Italian singsong."

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## 21

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DURING their visit to Vienna both Weber and Rossini came to know Beethoven. They found him an old man, his strong face heavily scarred and wrinkled, his hair almost completely gray. "The rugged, repellent man"—as Weber indelicately described him—had receded more and more into himself. Old age had increased his irritability and truculence to such a point that he was avoided sedulously by all save a few intimate friends.

No picture could express the indefinable sadness apparent in his every feature [Rossini commented after a meeting]. Under the thick eyebrows, his eyes shone as if from the back of a cavern; they were small, but they seemed to pierce. His voice was soft and rather veiled.

When we entered, he at first paid no attention but continued to correct some proofs. Then, suddenly, raising his head, he said in a fairly good Italian: "Ah, Rossini, so you are the composer of the *Barber of Seville*. I congratulate you. It is an excellent opera-buffa which I have read with great pleasure. It will be played as long as Italian opera exists."

I then expressed my profound admiration for his genius, and my gratitude for having been allowed to voice it in person. He answered with a deep sigh: "*O un infelice!*"

The evening following his meeting with Beethoven, Rossini was a guest at the palace of Prince Metternich. A Beethoven trio was performed in the grand salon. The contrast of splendor and luxury here and the squalor of

Beethoven's surroundings struck Rossini forcefully. He approached several noblemen with the discreet suggestion that a subscription be raised to improve Beethoven's situation. One after another the princes shook their heads impatiently. "He is impossible," said one. "No one can do anything for him." And another: "Beethoven is too irresponsible. Even if we bought him a beautiful house he would escape from it in a fortnight." And a third: "You are wasting your time trying to help him. He is a victim of his own sensibilities and eccentricities."

A victim of his own sensibilities and eccentricities. . . . This was forcefully proved four months after Rossini left Vienna, defeated in his attempt to provide for Beethoven. In November of 1822, *Fidelio* was revived at the Theater an der Wien. Beethoven insisted upon conducting the rehearsal himself, despite the veiled suggestions of his friends that he was too deaf to conduct efficiently. He could not hear the orchestra or the singers, and they in turn could not follow his beat. It was impossible to continue. Finally Beethoven's most intimate friend, Schindler, sent him a note. "Please, I beg you not to go on. Will explain later."

The truth that he was too deaf to direct his own music struck him with shattering force. He rushed home and, as Schindler later recalled,

threw himself upon the sofa, covering his face with both hands and staying so until we sat down at the table. But not a sound did he utter during the entire meal. His whole figure was the image of deepest melancholy and despondency.

The pain was somewhat assuaged when *Fidelio*—with the sensational Wilhelmine Schröder as Leonore—was triumphantly received. Beethoven "sat behind the con-

ductor and wrapped himself so closely in the folds of his cloak that only his eyes could be seen flashing from it." After the performance, he ascended the stage and patted Wilhelmine Schröder's cheeks. He was soft-spoken now, and gentle; his melancholy face was flushed with pleasure.

## 22

THE idea of setting Schiller's "Ode to Joy" had been present in Beethoven's mind since 1793. Then the thought of a dawning age of peace and brotherhood had been fanned by the French Revolution. Gradually the plan to make this a larger work, in which the poem was to be a choral climax, took hold of him. Again and again he sketched the themes, now for the slow movement, now for the scherzo. After 1817 the composition as a whole began to assume shape in his mind.

Other duties kept him busy. In 1823, upon the completion of the great *Missa Solemnis*, he set to work in earnest upon his long projected scheme. The sketches were completed in the winter of that year. In the spring of 1824 the score was ready. And on May 7 the Ninth Symphony was performed at the Kärntnertor-theater.

The program included, in addition to the symphony, two sections of the *Missa Solemnis* and a new overture. The theater was crowded in every part. Only the imperial box was empty, the royal family being out of town. Beethoven's intimate friends were there, even bed-ridden Zmeskill, who had to be carried in a chair.

Beethoven had insisted upon conducting, though he could not hear a single note, and the musicians had

agreed to pay attention only to Schuppanzigh, the concertmaster, and Umlauf, the choral director.

Beethoven stood as if on a lonely island [wrote the Swedish author, Atterbohm] and conducted the flood of his somber, demoniac harmonies with the strangest of motions. Thus, for instance, he commanded *pianissimo* by kneeling and extending his arms downward to the floor; at *fortissimo* he then sprang up like a relieved elastic bow, appeared to grow beyond his length, and opened his arms wide.

He conducted the last movement more slowly than the tempo adopted by the performers. When the music came to an end, he was still beating the time for the closing measures. With tears in her eyes, the singer, Unger, took Beethoven by the arm and gently turned him around toward the audience.

The crowds could hardly contain themselves during the performance of the symphony. At the end of the scherzo the parterre broke into applause for the fifth time.

"*Freude, schöner Götterfunken . . .*" the chorus chanted.  
 "*Alle Menschen werden Brüder. . . .*"

The brotherhood of man through joy! More than thirty years since he had for the first time come upon Schiller's poem. What events had happened since then! Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna, Metternich, Emperor Francis. To sing the brotherhood of man in 1824 required courage and irony.

"*Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt . . .*"

Schiller had sealed that brotherhood with a kiss meant for the entire world. But Schiller had died in 1805, still hopeful of the new century.

"*Alle Menschen werden Brüder . . .*"

Even now Beethoven had not completely thrown off his revolutionary ideas. Friedrich Wieck, Clara Schumann's father, recorded that on one occasion Beethoven had

talked voluminously about "stupid people in Vienna . . . aristocracy . . . democracy . . . revolution. . . ." But this was to be the last time that Beethoven was to hymn the power of Joy. The projected tenth symphony to Bacchus was never even sketched. All else that he wrote—the last great quartets, particularly—was written in sorrow.

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## 23

THE closing years of Beethoven's life were spent in the Schwarzspanierhaus, to which he moved in the fall of 1825. His old friend, Stephan von Breuning, who saw him frequently during this time, described these new quarters as "very ample."

The furnishings plainly showed the master's habit of life and was as follows: In the one-windowed ante-room there were a few chairs which stood against the wall and a dining table, at the right a sideboard, above it hung the oil portrait of his grandfather. . . . The living room was almost bare of furniture, but on the wall there hung a large picture of Beethoven himself. On the floor, however, piles of engraved and printed sheets of music, compositions of his own and of others, lay throughout in disorder. In the centre of the two-windowed room stood two pianos, their curved sides next to each other, the keyboard of the English grand . . . facing those who entered. . . . Besides, there was a chest of drawers, a bookstand with books and manuscripts, Beethoven's bed, a table, and a stand for garments next to the stove. The last room was Beethoven's study. There he used to work at a table that stood a little off from the window. His face turned towards the door which led into the large room.

There was the old disorder in his rooms, but in the man's mind—more removed than ever from men—there was a greater order, a greater clarity and vision, a greater unfolding in new directions than ever before. Prince

Gallitzin had ordered three string quartets. Beethoven had taken longer than usual for the composition of these, for here he was speaking in a new idiom. He had already sent him the first in E-flat (Opus 127). By the time he moved into his new home in the Schwarzschanerhaus the other two were ready: the quartet in A-minor (Opus 132) and that in B-flat major (Opus 130).

To his friend, Holzer, he remarked: "Art demands of us that we shall not stand still. You will find [in these quartets] a new manner of voice treatment, and, thank God! there is less lack of fancy than before."

Less lack of fancy! He was wrestling with new forms, breaking the old mold of chamber music, just as he had broken the traditional mold of the symphony. He was reaching out for unfamiliar ways of expressing ideas and feelings new to music, and he had succeeded. With each new creation of these last works one was tempted to say: The art of the quartet can go no further!

Hard upon the three Gallitzin quartets came, in the following year, the C-sharp minor quartet: and even as he was sick with his last sickness, he completed the quartet in F.

Never before had his fancy been so rich. Theme broke in upon theme; fragments of melody were varied, transformed, then almost willfully interrupted and recalled. Movements were broken up, then just as suddenly reconstituted, finally built up into an organic whole. Remote new worlds were explored, remote new experiences given voice.

The difficulty of these quartets transcended the skill of many contemporary players. Beethoven frequently chided them, sometimes unkindly, sometimes brutally: his old friend Schuppanzigh, for example. Far behind

these works lay the quiet perfection and completeness of Mozart, far behind even his own earlier quartets written for Rasoumovsky. The old standard of a simple coherence was now abandoned; and in its place was to be found a more subtle type of unity in which—as in the C-sharp minor quartet—the many diverse movements and ideas were woven into one fabric. In these quartets were things to startle the imagination: strange and forbidding modulations, stark intervals, a brusqueness, impatience and even a harshness of accent such as Beethoven had never put into music; and at other moments, a tranquil polyphony which was contemplative and mystical.

And in these last quartets, Beethoven spoke that grief which had tormented his life, and which he had first attempted to communicate in the Heiligenstadt Testament. To listen to, to understand the Cavatina of the B-flat major quartet is to perceive the depth of his unutterable loneliness.

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For a few weeks in 1826 there was a rustic interlude at Gneixendorf. Already ill, he had come to spend some time with his brother. The country refreshed him. He rose at five in the morning and worked until seven “beating time with hands and feet, singing, humming and writing.” After breakfast he sauntered out into the fields. To those who did not know him he was a strange sight—howling, gesticulating wildly, oblivious of everything around him, making rapid sketches in his notebook. The peasants in the fields looked up and laughed at the madman. Sometimes unruly merriment shook him. He felt for a time that he was back in the Rhine country or in

Döbling composing the *Pastorale*. . . . Then back to his house for dinner, and work, and more work. Always work.

In December he was in Vienna again, seriously ill. He had caught cold on his journey back. Before long, the jaundice and dropsy set in.

He was dying, but the old rancor still stirred within him. To Hummel, who visited him in his last days, he berated the taste of the times and spoke bitterly of the court. "Write a volume of penitential hymns and dedicate it to the Empress," he advised him sardonically.

Friends and admirers came to visit him. Was Schubert among them? They had been living in the same city for years. Schubert had frequently seen the man whom he admired above all others—sometimes in the street, sometimes in the café Rebhuhn. They had friends in common. Yet they had never met, never exchanged a word of greeting. Perhaps at the very end of his life, on his death-bed, Beethoven met and spoke to Schubert. The stories of their meeting are varied and often contradictory. But there is little doubt that Beethoven was much impressed by a gift of Schubert's songs which had been brought him during his closing days. "Surely," he is reported to have said, "there is a divine spark in this Franz Schubert!"

Beethoven recognized that the end was drawing near. On March 23 he drew up his will. Soon thereafter he lapsed into unconsciousness from which he never recovered.

The strong man lay [wrote Gerhardt von Breuning] completely unconscious . . . breathing so stertorously that the rattle could be heard at a distance. The following day there was thunder and lightning in Vienna. Suddenly, at a peal of thunder, Beethoven raised himself in his bed, directed a defiant fist at the growling heavens, and then fell back. He was dead.

He died at one o'clock on the afternoon of March 26. Anselm Hüttenbrenner—Schubert's friend—pressed down the half-open eyelids.

Three days later he was buried. In his honor the schools of Vienna were closed. More than twenty thousand persons gathered in front of his house to witness the funeral procession. A special military force was called out to keep the crowd under control.

When the bearers had brought the body to the entrance hall of the Währing cemetery, we sang Weber's *Rasch tritt der Tod den Menschen an* [wrote Ludwig Cramolini, a singer of the Vienna Opera], then took up the coffin and bore it to the church of the Minorites. The distance is about a thousand paces, but the way there lasted an hour, for the crowd was enormous. . . . We had to walk step by step and the burden became so heavy to me in spite of the fact that we set the coffin down and changed places several times, that I thanked God when we arrived at the Church. The ribbons that hung from the coffin, which was covered with laurel wreaths, were carried by musicians who walked beside us, among whom were Schubert, Hummel and Umlauf. Following were many noted poets, singers and actors of the day. Over one thousand carriages, including several imperial ones, closed the funeral procession.

Before the cortège entered the churchyard of the cemetery a halt was made, and the celebrated actor, Anschütz, delivered Franz Grillparzer's threnody:

He was an artist, and what he was, he was only through art. . . .

He was an artist, and who is worthy of a place by his side? . . .

The man who comes after him will not continue; he will be but an imitator, for this prophet ended where the limits of art are set.

He remained alone because he found no peer. . . .

AFTER the funeral Schubert—in the company of Schober and Randhartinger—entered the Mehlgrube Tavern,

near the cemetery. Schubert proposed a toast to the dead man. Then, when the glasses were refilled, he proposed another—to him, among them, who would be the next to die.

Could Schubert have divined that he was proposing a toast to himself?

But first he was to have a taste of success. In March, 1828, the Musikverein of Vienna gave a concert in its hall devoted entirely to Schubert's works: included were a new trio, the *Battle Song* for male chorus, *Allmacht* sung by Johann Vogl, *Ständchen* sung by Josefine Fröhlich, and *Auf dem Wasser zu singen*. It seemed that now at least Vienna had been awakened to his presence. The concert took place before "more people than the hall had ever been known to hold." The enthusiasm which Schubert's music aroused was great. The audience was unmistakably appreciative. His day—his friends insisted—was at hand.

But he was sick—mortally sick. In September he was living with his brother in a suburb of Vienna, still making ambitious plans for the future. He had completed a number of new songs, among them those of Heine; he thought of new symphonies, song cycles, quartets. He spoke of continuing the study of counterpoint under a recognized master when he became a little stronger. Even while he lay dying, he was busily correcting proofs of *Die Winterreise*.

On the twelfth of November he wrote to Schober:

I am ill. For eleven days I have neither eaten nor drunk anything. I am tottering from the chair to the bed, and vice-versa. Rinna is attending me. Whenever I eat anything, I promptly bring it up again. Do be kind and help me in this desperate condition by sending me some books. I have read Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Spy*, *The Pilot* and *The Settler*. In case you have any other books by this author, I beg you to leave them for me at

the café-house with Bogner's wife. My brother, who is conscientiousness itself, will certainly bring them to me.

Six days later he became delirious. He babbled endlessly. He wished to know if he were lying next to Beethoven. . . .

Late in the afternoon of November 19—at 3 o'clock—he died.

The last of the songs in *Die Winterreise* is "Der Leiermann"—"The Organ-grinder."

*Drüben hinter'm Dorfe  
Steht ein Leiermann,  
Und mit starren Fingern  
Dreht er, was er kann. . . .*

There behind the village stands an organ man  
And with frozen fingers grinds as best he can,  
On he totters barefoot, o'er the icy way,  
Not a single penny in his little tray.  
Yet for all his grinding, no one seems to care  
And the loafing mongrels snarl about him there,  
And he lets the whole world wag as best it may,  
Quite content his crazy organ still to play.

Wonderful, old fellow! Shall I go with thee?  
Wilt thou, while I'm singing, grind a tune for me?

Wilhelm Müller's poem might aptly serve as Schubert's epitaph.

Throughout the day an endless procession of people filed through his rooms for a last glimpse of him. At two-thirty in the afternoon of November 21 the funeral train set out from Kettenbrückengasse, where Schubert had died, to the Church of St. Joseph. Here Schubert's *Pax Vobiscum* was sung to words by Schober. Then the body was committed to earth, and Schober recited a last poetic farewell.

The more formal epitaph was composed by Franz Grillparzer:

Death has here buried rich possessions, but even richer hopes. Here lies Franz Schubert, born January 31, 1797, died November 19, 1828. Aetat. 31.

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That night it was unusually quiet at Bogner's Café. Of that merry group of artists that gathered there almost nightly not one was present—not Mayrhofer, nor Vogl, nor Bauernfeld, nor Schwind, nor Hüttenbrenner. When one of the patrons remarked the strange absence of the group that night, Herr Bogner answered: "Haven't you heard? Franz Schubert, the little musician, was buried today."

Each of Schubert's friends spent the evening alone. Mayrhofer secluded himself in his rooms in the Wipplingerstrasse—the same rooms in which he had lived with Schubert—to write a poem, *Secret Remembrance to the Memory of Schubert*. Bauernfeld noted in his diary: "The most honest soul, the finest friend! I wish I were lying there instead of him!" And Schwind, who was then in Munich, wrote to Schober: "Schubert is dead, and with him all that was brightest and most beautiful in our life."



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BOOK THREE

INTERMEZZO

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“BIEDERMEIER”—that gentle Philistine character who first appeared in the pages of the comic magazine, the *Fliegende Blätter*, and thereafter gave his name to the period between 1815 and 1848—Biedermeier was as many-faced as his age. A good portion of him was the easygoing Philistine who took his life honestly and ingenuously, who drank his beer, played his pillow games at parties, sang Viennese songs, and grew sentimental in the café-house. He loved the comforts of domestic homeliness, simple furniture, lovers’ knots and garlands.

But Biedermeier had another—more heroic—face: the face of greatness transfigured by sorrow. This Biedermeier was not altogether at home in the Vienna after the Congress. This was Biedermeier the poetic, the creative, unable to wrest recognition from his city. This Biedermeier was Schubert, Schwind, Grillparzer, and Lenau.

There was yet a third Biedermeier. His character was mixed. He was naïve and simple, yet sharp and cunning at the same time. He was sentimental and easily aroused, yet capable of bitterness. He was that rare kind of Philistine—conscious of his own Philistinism. His voice was heard in the Leopoldstädter and the Josephstädter theaters. He was human, a child of the people. His name was Ferdinand Raimund—actor and dramatist. He was the most gifted inheritor of the traditions of the Viennese popular theater, and he carried it forward to new heights. For he combined naturalism, fairy lore and allegory; he blended the noble with the vulgar. His themes were touched with the softness of sad reflection—if reflection it

may be called. He had the gift of the popular homely dialect, of popular songs which became the people's songs, of vivid, sharp characters, who were commonplace, rude, vulgar, honest—and alive.

There was bravado about Raimund and his characters—a bravado of fancy, free-to-wander and boast. He could say vaingloriously of his muse:

I stick the sun in my hat,  
And play dice with the stars.

Raimund was the common man's poet, the poet of the peasant and the artisan, gilding his lot with the fairy gold of sudden riches, flattering the poor man's honesty and common sense, covering his troubles with the sadness of unachieved hope. After all, he said, what difference did it make? Rich today, poor tomorrow! *Der Verschwender*—"The Spendthrift"—his most popular play, dealt with this theme. *Der Bauer als Millionär*—"The Peasant as Millionaire"—treated the obverse. *Biedermeierisch* was the pathos and fatalism which crept into his verses. What Viennese did not recognize Valentin's famous lines:

*Was streiten sich die Leut herum  
Oft um den Wert des Glücks . . .*

with their trite but charmingly worded insistence that at the end, "*Weiss keiner nix!*"—"No one knows anything at all!"? What Viennese did not delight in the consoling image of Fate, taking the carpenter's plane (for Valentin was a carpenter) and in the end planing all things evenly?

Biedermeier had still another face, a face disclosing bitterness and self-mockery. His gift for satire and parody did not spare even Metternich himself. This was the Biedermeier of the dramatist, Johann Nestroy. He, too, was aware of the plight of the poor, but

he was less resigned. "Providence," he once said in his incomparable Viennese dialect, "has so much to do with the rich and the fortunate that there is no time left for the poor."

Then there was the religious Biedermeier, offspring of romanticism, seeking after a turbulent and erotic life the peace and consolation of the only Church. He saw in Austria and in the Habsburgs a living example of the unity of the Church and the State, a truly patriarchal society. This medievalism was preached by Friedrich Schlegel, whom Metternich did not fail to reward, by Gentz, by Adam Müller. Its great revivalist was the mystic, Clemens Hoffbauer. Down with the ideas of Enlightenment! Down with Josephinism! Revive the unity, peace and wholeness of medieval Christendom!

And still one other face of Biedermeier—one which the others would gladly forget—glowers unpleasantly on the fairy tales, waltzes, and the prevailing *Gemütlichkeit*. He was the child of a new age, and a member of a prolific family growing more numerous and terrible with the advance of the century. He was the child of the new industrialism: the machine. For in Vienna—as elsewhere in Europe—the machine was becoming master. Not the older craft guilds, nor the Congress of Vienna, nor Emperor Francis, nor even Metternich himself, could stop its advance. And with the machine came the new proletariat.

Between 1827 and 1847 the population of Vienna increased by about one-half, but there were no homes for them (new housing having increased by only 10 per cent). So they were huddled—as in London, Manchester and Glasgow—in "slums" somewhat removed from the costly splendor of the inner city.

In the upper ranks the sharp distinctions and caste were being broken down. The Napoleonic Wars had enriched some and impoverished others. Wealth soon acquired titles. New names spoke of a sensational rise: Geymüller, Fries, Eskeles, Arnstein, Rothschild. In his feudal pride Prince Schwarzenberg, in whose estimation the race of man began only with barons, might well fret at these upstarts.

Biedermeier looked around him and was perplexed.

In her charming salon Karoline Pichler, bluestocking and novelist, sighed. New fashions, new faces, new ideas, new salons—and worst of all, a new aristocracy of wealth replacing that of birth. Philistinism and money! Art exhibitions only once in three years—and then, what art! Ruefully she noted in her memoirs for the year of 1828: “Vienna has changed much.”

## 2

THOUGH Biedermeier lingered on until 1848, what was great in him died in 1828 with Franz Schubert. With Schubert, too, died the first (and greatest) creative period in Vienna's musical life. It had lasted for eighty years, and had been marked by the appearance of Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert. What was loftiest and noblest in the music of the period died with them. For twenty years thereafter there was a creative barrenness which contrasted sharply with all the richness that had preceded. Felix Mendelssohn, on a visit to the city only three years after Beethoven's death, lamented the lack of seriousness in the musical life of Vienna, and the absence of permanent professional

orchestras like those in Mannheim, Paris and Leipzig. The closest approach to one—die Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, composed of amateurs—found it expedient to punctuate the various movements of a symphony with brilliant operatic arias in order to sustain the interest of wearied Biedermeier. At the opera the Italians and Italianate Germans reigned once more. In place of *Figaro*, *Alceste* and *Fidelio* there was a continuous run of Meyerbeer, of Lortzing's *Waffenschmied*, of Flotow's *Martha*, of Hérold's *Zampa*—all agreeable and soothing, good for tired ears and hearts, but far removed from the greatness of Gluck or Weber.

But if Vienna no longer created, it was ready to be startled. The twenty years preceding the upheaval of 1848 brought to the city the most notable virtuosos of the world. In fact, one might say that this was the period which witnessed the birth of modern virtuosity. In quick succession they came, sometimes to conquer, sometimes to fail: Paganini, Chopin, Clara Wieck, Liszt, Jenny Lind and Anton Rubinstein.

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VIENNA had been awaiting Paganini since 1817. In that year Prince Metternich himself had invited the fabulous Italian, but sudden illness had made the visit impossible. Legend had preceded Paganini and was to grow in the intervening eleven years, till the musician seemed in danger of disappearing behind the myth. In Italy rumor had already connected him with adventures in high places, both musical and amatory. Wherever he went, the

announcement, *Paganini farà sentire il suo violino*, had brought throngs of adulators.

Finally, in 1828, came the promised visit to Vienna.

In March will arrive in our imperial city the most celebrated of Italian violinists, Chevalier Niccolò Paganini, who has decided to undertake an artistic tour of Italy, to offer his talents to artistic Vienna, a gesture of respect which will certainly meet with the most deserved appreciation.

Incredulous, skeptical Vienna, having read the tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann concerning Kapellmeister Kreisler, came to see with its own eyes this "devil's offspring," as he was often called. Vienna came, heard and went mad.

Paganini was then already over forty, pale, thin, toothless. His head was very large, and his ugly beaked nose added little to its beauty. His mouth was Voltairean in its mockery; his long black hair fell over his shoulders. He himself once confessed:

I am neither young nor handsome. On the contrary, I am very ugly. But when women hear my music, my melting tones, they begin weeping and then I become their idol, and they lie at my feet.

Not only the women; the men too. He gave his first concert in Vienna in the Redoutensaal, on the morning of March 29, 1828. "The audience was hypnotized," reported the *Theaterzeitung*. Castelli, the dramatist, wrote:

Never has an artist caused such a great sensation within our walls as this God of the violin. : : : After the first two concerts there was only one name—his—on all lips. It was as though political art, society and city news held no interest for people, for over everything else they became dumb, and only Paganini was the subject of all thought and conversation.

And Franz Schubert, who heard him at his first concert, said: "I have heard an angel sing." Grillparzer wrote a rhapsodic poem in his honor.

Everything went Paganini: pretzels, rolls, sweets, gloves. A good shot in billiards was called a "Paganini

coup." A popular theatrical piece at the Theater an der Wien was inspired by him. For one day only was frantic Vienna distracted from the Paganini wonder by its first sight of a giraffe—a gift to Francis by the Pasha of Egypt.

The last of more than twenty concerts took place in July, and Paganini performed an "orchestral sonata" by a certain Panny, the effects of which included nothing less than the approach of a storm, the storm itself, a raging sea, confusion, peace and joy.

Having vanquished the Viennese—his pockets filled with coin—Paganini went on to subdue the rest of Europe. Schubert's close friend, Bauernfeld, remarked sadly:

The total sum that Schubert made by his compositions in the entire course of his life amounted to the equivalent of 575 pounds. For that sum, he composed considerably more than a thousand songs, symphonies, operas, dances, and all other forms of music. During the last year of Schubert's life, Paganini gave eight concerts in Vienna, and received in a few weeks the same sum that Schubert had earned by all his work.

#### 4

ONE year later Frédéric Chopin arrived in Vienna. Eighteen years old, he was already a pianist of unquestionable genius and a composer of great promise. Since he came without the reputation for diabolic technique or amatory escapades—a Pole from Warsaw—he did not take Vienna by storm. A few connoisseurs recognized his talents: Haslinger, the publisher, hastened to acquaint him with Karl Czerny, Schuppanzigh and other notables of Vienna. Chopin came to know Prince Lichnowsky and Count Gallenberg, the latter of whom invited him to give

a public performance at the Burgtheater—without remuneration.

On August 11, 1829, Chopin played among other works two of his own. He won the admiration of the Viennese for the "indescribable dexterity of his technique, the subtle finish of his gradations of tone, reflecting a profoundly sensitive nature, the cleanness of his interpretation and of his composition which bear the mark of great genius." He was persuaded to give a second concert. In fact, Count Dietrichstein urged him to remain in Vienna and make his home there. But Chopin himself knew that his playing would not hold the Viennese for long. He felt that it appealed to women and artists—but that for men it was too delicate. As one journal remarked: "He plays very quietly, with none of the dash and daring that generally distinguish the artist."

He was back in Vienna toward the end of 1830. This time he thought he might settle there. He established himself near the Burgtheater, studied hard, made many friends, and waited.

In the winter came the news of serious disturbances in his native Poland, and of the ruthless suppression of the Poles by the Russians. Chopin, in whom art only heightened a patriotic and nationalistic ardor, dreamed of going back and taking his place in the struggle. His friends in Vienna and his parents in Warsaw urged discretion. But Chopin was restive. "It is useless," he wrote in his notebook, "for Malfatti to persuade me that every artist is cosmopolitan. Even if that were so, as an artist I am still in my cradle; but as a Pole I have begun my third decade."

His parents insisted that his place was in Vienna, and somewhat regretfully Chopin acquiesced.

The prospects for a concert in Vienna were for the moment distant, since he now refused to play without being paid. Haslinger, alienated by Chopin's demands, placed no end of difficulties in the way of publications. The endless bargaining wearied Chopin. Aimlessly and despondently he wandered the streets of the city.

Today it was beautiful in the Prater. Crowds of people with whom I have nothing to do. I admired the foliage; the spring smell and the incense of Nature brought back my childhood feelings. . . . Only I get melancholy. Why? I do not care even for music today. It is late. But I am not sleepy. I do not know what is the matter with me. All I know is that I have started my third decade.

He had started his third decade—and his success seemed more remote than ever. Torn between ardent hopes for Poland's liberation and despondency over what appeared to him to be his own artistic failure in Vienna, he left the city in July of 1831 and journeyed to Paris. Perhaps Fortune would be kinder there. . . .

## 5

"MENDELSSOHN ought to come here. Good God! How a really good musician is wanted here. There is such beautiful material!"

So wrote the piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck, when he arrived in Vienna in December of 1837. He had come from Leipzig with his eighteen-year-old daughter, Clara, whose playing, he hoped, would captivate Vienna as it had done other cities.

She had been something of a child wonder, and upon her musical education Friedrich Wieck had lavished all his

industry, zeal and, one must add, all his uncompromising austerity—for he was an inexorable martinet. She had prospered under his hand. From the moment when she was barely six and had been passionately aroused by a Beethoven concert in the Gewandhaus she had grown in understanding and power. At the age of nine she had mastered a Hummel concerto, and not long thereafter had begun her concert career. In Leipzig, in 1829, she met Paganini (who had just come from Vienna). Paganini voiced his astonishment at her talent and always preserved for her and her father the warmest admiration.

One year later young Robert Schumann, having resolved to abandon the study of law for music, took up his residence with them in Leipzig. Friedrich Wieck had written to Schumann's mother: "I pledge myself to turn your son, Robert, by means of his talent and imagination, within three years into one of the greatest pianists now living."

He did not know then that he had decided the life not only of Robert Schumann but also of his own daughter. For in that household, which brought together under one roof the remarkable young composer and one of the most promising child geniuses and bound them in love and common enterprise, was born the greatness of both Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck. She was only ten, he was nineteen. She was—so far as reputation and technique were concerned—already far beyond him. He was merely the beginner. But he grew rapidly—emotionally and intellectually—as musician and thinker, and was soon to produce those astonishing works of his, the rapidity of whose production and originality and vitality can be understood only by reference to the girl he was to love.

She was the star, and for the time being he merely an admiring stargazer. It was she who played before Goethe, one year before he died. It was she who, in Paris, mingled with that extraordinary group of musicians, among whom were Chopin, Mendelssohn and Liszt. Only thirteen years old now, she had "discovered" Chopin's works and was playing his concerto.

When she was fourteen years old, she was sure she was in love with Robert. Long before this he himself had been certain that he loved her.

Friedrich Wieck is living proof that it is not only mothers who confound the marital hopes of their children. Friedrich Wieck set himself against Schumann with a singleness and persistence which brought—for a time—misery upon both; divided Clara herself between two loyalties, and seriously threatened the development of her emotional life. Whatever the basis of his antagonism—whether jealousy of Robert (for he was reluctant to relinquish his hold on his daughter), dislike of his person, or contempt for his indigence—Wieck was responsible for that turbulence in their lives which is immortally expressed not only in Schumann's early music but in the great love letters which passed between them.

Already she had begun to perform his compositions in public—new, different things, with their strange irrelevancies and flights, their unorthodox harmonies, their impulsive rhythmic force, which she understood better than anyone else.

\* \* \*

Here in Vienna, Clara Wieck wrote often to Schumann, in spite of the ill will of her father—letters of distress, of yearning, of uncertainty; while he also wrote, sometimes

voicing dismay, more frequently admiration and praise, for he was never envious of her successes, but always proud and resplendent in the reflected glory.

Where Chopin had failed, Clara Wieck succeeded. She had come to Vienna with trepidation, but from the very first Vienna was hers. "The ice is broken and our faintheartedness has disappeared, as if by magic." She was bringing to Vienna the music of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann—and, strangely enough, of Schubert. Bauernfeld, Lenau and Grillparzer heard her play a sonata of Beethoven, and Grillparzer, entranced, wrote that the magic key which unlocked the treasures of Beethoven had been found once more by this young girl.

The key fits, the lid flies back, the spirits  
Rise from the depths, and bow submissive heads  
Before this gracious and pure-hearted mistress  
Who leads them with white fingers, while she plays.

In December there was the first public concert at the Musikvereinsaal. Her diary speaks glowingly of her "triumph": "The audience consisted of a select body of the most distinguished artistic people in Vienna." This triumph was astonishing, since Vienna had not as yet discovered Bach; and when, at the subsequent concert, she was compelled to repeat a fugue, Friedrich Wieck justly remarked that a new era of piano playing had commenced.

At the third concert there was an "indescribable crush"—eight hundred people. Friedrich Wieck had good reason to rejoice. The tour had already netted him more than a thousand gulden.

She thought of coming back and settling in Vienna with Schumann. She urged him to transfer the magazine of which he was editor:

We will come here, or you can come first. Give your paper to Diabelli. . . . In a word, we can lead the happiest life here, while in Leipzig we are not recognized.

Her father was a constant irritant.

I am still dissatisfied with myself now, in spite of all their applause. . . . One thing only can make me proud—you!

And Robert replied:

The more I think of Vienna, the more tremendously I like it. In the house such a housewife, in my heart such a beloved and loving wife, and in the world an artist such as it does not get every day. . . .

She was growing up rapidly and now began pitting her strength against that of her father.

In the carriage today we spoke of you, and I told him again that he could say what he liked to me, I would never give you up. And I say to you again that my love knows no bounds, if you wanted my life today, I would give it up.

In April she left for Graz. Friedrich Wieck was as proud as a peacock. His daughter, though she was a Protestant, a woman, and very young, had been appointed pianiste to the Emperor!

## 6

IN January of 1838, Clara Wieck wrote in her diary: "Liszt is not yet here, but is expected daily." As a young girl she had met him in Paris, but she was not prepared for the wonder she was now to witness.

In 1831, while he was still in Paris, Liszt had heard Paganini, and the event proved of signal importance for him. A few days later he wrote:

Ah, if only I don't go mad, you'll see what an artist I shall become! Yes, an artist such as you demand, such as the present demands. "I, too, am a painter," Michaelangelo exclaimed, when he saw a masterpiece for the first time. Since the last appearance of Paganini, your friend, small and mean as he may be, incessantly repeats these words of the great man. . . . What a man, what a violin, what an artist. God! What suffering, what pain, what martyrdom in those four strings of his! . . . And his expression and manner of phrasing, and, finally, his soul!

Paganini had set Liszt on his feet again at a time when he was much troubled about his own course. Paganini had for the first time made him aware of the potentialities of a musical instrument in the hands of a great interpreter. There were other influences in Paris in succeeding years which heartened him and more than anything else gave him courage to continue as a virtuoso. Chief among these were Chopin, who arrived in Paris in the same year, and the romantic composer, Berlioz. But the event which finally determined Liszt to devote himself to the piano was his incredible success in Vienna.

He had been touring in Italy when the news of the inundation of the Hungarian city Pesth by the Danube brought him to Vienna so that he might give benefit concerts for the victims of the flood. He had planned two concerts, but actually gave ten. More than 25,000 gulden were collected. Vienna had never heard such piano playing. It seemed as if this young man of twenty-seven were playing not a keyboard instrument consisting of strings and hammers but an orchestra full of instruments. Sixteen years before, as a boy of eleven and a protégé of Beethoven and Czerny, he had performed prodigies which had astonished the Viennese. But this Franz Liszt was not merely a virtuoso, he was a poet; and he revealed to them—perhaps for the first time—the full grandeur of Beethoven.

### The Wiecks noted in their diary:

We have been hearing Liszt. He cannot be compared to any other player. He stands alone. He arouses terror and amazement, and is a very attractive person. His appearance at the piano is indescribable. He is absorbed by the piano. His passion knows no bounds; not infrequently he jars on one's sense of beauty by tearing melodies to pieces. He has a great intellect. One can say of him that "his art is his life."

And to Schumann, Clara wrote: "Since I have heard and seen Liszt, I feel like a schoolgirl."

But Liszt thought highly of her. "Her talent delighted me. She has perfect mastery of technique, depth and sincerity of feeling, and is specially remarkable for her noble bearing."

What must have pleased her even more was Liszt's admiration of Schumann; for after hearing her perform the *Carneval*, he said: "What a mind! This is one of the greatest works I know!"

## 7

It was with high hopes that Robert Schumann set out for Vienna. Clara had painted so very promising a vision! He was the editor of *Die Neue Zeitschrift für die Musik*—the most provocative and courageous of the new critical journals. Vienna, which had opened its arms to Clara, would perhaps welcome him too. After Schubert there had been no composer worthy of the name there. Here he was—gifted, young, a critic and a composer of some note, Schubert's successor, no less! For a moment perhaps he had forgotten that it was Clara Wieck and Liszt who had brought back Schubert to the Viennese.

At first Vienna delighted him. Soon, however, he began to sense the intrigues, cliques and divisions around him. "There is no lack of discrimination as to what is good; there is only an absence of organized opinion and cooperation."

His efforts to "organize opinion" were futile. The establishment of a new journal in Vienna—even a musical journal—was viewed by the police with suspicion. The publisher, Haslinger, who had promised him assistance, actually conspired with the police and censor against him behind his back, and in the end succeeded in bringing Schumann's plans to naught.

Schumann's disappointment with Vienna was lightened by Clara's love and by a resurgence of his ability to compose music.

I have revelled in the thought of you [he wrote to her] and have loved you as I never did before. I sat at the piano all week and wrote and laughed and cried all at once. . . . Twelve sheets written in eight days. . . .

Sometimes she chid him for his distrust of himself.

You ask if I would forsake you if you became a poor man. Such a man as you, with such an intellect and such a heart, can never be poor. . . . I will share joy and sorrow with you; my heart belongs to you alone, and were you to forsake me, my heart would remain the same. You would be my last sight. . . .

When he received news of his brother's fatal illness, he left Vienna with small regret. Only one gift he brought home from Vienna. On a visit to Schubert's brother, Ferdinand, he had discovered a manuscript which stunned him. It was the C-major symphony—the greatest of Schubert's symphonies. Deeply stirred, he immediately wrote an article for his Leipzig magazine, which resulted in the first performance of the work by Mendelssohn's Gewandhaus orchestra. Was it with this

marvelous discovery in mind that he composed his farewell to Vienna, the *Faschingsschwank aus Wien* in which he maliciously incorporated a theme of the forbidden *Marseillaise*? Poor, charming Viennese! With their customary, easygoing *Schlamperei* they hadn't even taken the trouble to look through Schubert's manuscripts!

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## 8

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ROBERT SCHUMANN and Clara Wieck were back in Vienna in 1846. In spite of Friedrich Wieck they had been married seven years before, and then had begun an artistic partnership such as has had few equals. Both grew immeasurably, and were deepened by their intimacy. Robert Schumann's most fertile creative achievements—alas! too soon to be ended—found in Clara their voice, their expression. He was the creator, she the interpreter of his creations.

In a hopeful mood they came back to Vienna, where *she* had been so happy. She was prepared to convince the Viennese of her husband's greatness, to allow them to atone in part for their former indifference to him. But the blazing hopes were soon chilled.

Clara was distraught. "There is none of the enthusiasm of nine years ago." For the first time in her life she was compelled to shoulder a deficit—of nearly a hundred gulden. What would one not give today to have been present at that third and fateful concert: Schumann conducting his own first symphony in B-flat major, leading the orchestral accompaniment to his concerto with Clara at the piano, and finally, the young Russian pianist, Anton Rubinstein, joining Clara Schumann in

the performances of Schumann's *Andante and Variations* for two pianos?

"Calm yourself, dear Clara," Robert said to her when she appeared more depressed than ever. "In ten years' time all will have changed." Sadly and prophetically—all *was* changed.

With trepidation both looked forward to the fourth and last concert. Happily, in this moment of despair, a good angel appeared. Jenny Lind, whose voice had completely captivated Vienna, now offered to appear with the Schumanns at their last concert. This generous gesture spelled the success of the venture. Both Clara and Robert realized that the populace had come to hear Jenny Lind sing, and not the music of the German musicians. "One song of Lind's," Clara remarked sadly, "has done what I, with all my playing, could not do."

With relief they both sped from the scene of their failure. "How different our feelings were at leaving Vienna from what they had been when we came!" Clara said. "Then we thought we had found our future haven of refuge, and now all our desire for it has vanished!"

## 9

THE "Swedish Nightingale"—whose kind deed had saved the Schumanns from the shame of a deficit—had come to Vienna at the solicitation of the Theater an der Wien. Her career had begun promisingly in Sweden, and her art steadily matured in Paris and Berlin, so that soon there were many who considered her the greatest singer of her generation. For her Meyerbeer wrote the opera, *Das Feldlager in Schlesien*. And Vienna, eager to

hear her, had urged her to make five guest appearances at the Theater an der Wien in her most famous roles.

She made her début in Bellini's *Norma* on April 22, 1846, and in spite of a faulty support by the other singers and an ill-trained orchestra, she aroused her audience to such a pitch of enthusiasm that they recalled her thirty times.

Her achievements in Art deserve, in the very highest degree, the universal acknowledgement they have received [the editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* reported]. She is the perfect picture of noblest womanhood. . . . I count the moments that passed at her début among the most enjoyable artistic pleasures I have ever yet experienced.

But not even Lind was to escape Viennese rancor and envy. The Kärntnertor-theater spared no efforts to denigrate her performances, and tried to bring them to an end through political influence. But she rose above this opposition, and her appearance in *La Somnambula*, *Der Freischütz* and *Les Huguenots* brought her the adulation even of the royal family. At a benefit performance of Bellini's *Somnambula*, the Empress threw her a royal wreath—an act without court precedent. "You have truly understood me," Jenny Lind said in a brief but touching curtain speech. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Following her last appearance in Vienna a group of admiring young men, outside the theater, unharnessed the horses from her carriage so that they themselves might draw her home.

Jenny Lind returned to Vienna for a second and last visit on December 30, 1846, and the following January appeared in Donizetti's *La Fille du régiment*. Her reception was no less tumultuous now, nor the praises sung for her less rhapsodic. The *Wiener Zeitung* wrote:

Her song is the audible expression of her inner life. Her acting and singing melt into one another, and the beauty of her dramatic expression moves hand in hand with the nobility of the declamatory vocalization. A voice so ideal, and so full of soul, a manner so earnest, such childlike naïveté, such deep poetry, such perfect innocence of song, form a very rare manifestation in the world of art.

Besides her appearances at the Theater an der Wien, Lind gave private concerts at the palace of the Russian Grand Duchess, at a soirée held in the palace of the Archduchess Sophie, and at a musicale given by the Empress. On March 28 she was presented, by command of the Emperor, the official diploma of *Kammersängerin*.

The following week she gave her last public performance in Vienna, in the same opera with which she had made her Viennese début—Bellini's *Norma*. She wrote to a friend: "I have never met such kind people as the Viennese in general. I can find no words with which to describe my stay in Vienna."

## IO

THE young Russian pianist, Anton Rubinstein—who participated with Jenny Lind in the Schumann concert—took back with him fond memories of Vienna when he returned there in 1846. He had been a prodigy in 1841, and had been brought to Vienna by his teacher, Villoing, to exhibit his gifts. The praises he had received from critics and audiences were rapturous. One of the critics, Dr. A. J. Becher, had called the child Rubinstein an extraordinary phenomenon because of his "technical proficiency, deep feeling, clear understanding and the vitality and spirit expressed in the young artist's performance."

A few years had brought a marked reversal of opinion. Now, approaching maturity, he came back to Vienna to solidify his position as concert pianist and to obtain the advice and help of Franz Liszt. But he soon learned that Vienna had forgotten him for the wonderful Jenny Lind. Even Liszt, at first, proved unsympathetic.

As a result, Rubinstein found himself in pressing straits.

I lived in an attic of a large house, and often for two or three days in succession I had no money to pay for a dinner at the nearest restaurant, and so I went without food. The room was fairly bare, and soon I crowded every corner, and literally carpeted the floor with my writings. And what did I not write in those days of hunger! Every sort of composition, not only in the department of music—operas, oratorios, symphonies and songs—but articles, philosophical, literary and critical as well. . . . My prolonged absence at last reminded Liszt of my existence. He took it into his head to pay me a visit. . . . The first sight of my quarters seemed to shock him. . . . He showed, however, much tact and delicacy, and in a most friendly manner invited me to dine with him on the same day—a most welcome invitation since the pangs of hunger had been gnawing at me for several days. After this, I was always on good terms with Liszt.

Liszt urged Rubinstein to give a concert in Vienna to reawaken interest in him. In May of 1847, Rubinstein made his reappearance as a pianist. He was no longer the startling prodigy. He was treated coldly, even severely. One of the music journals attacked him—for all things!—for treating his audience “in an undignified and nonchalant manner.” He was assailed for aloofness on the platform, for his reserved and distant manner, his austerity of style and his lack of emotion.

Embittered and penniless, Rubinstein was forced to accept pupils. If he failed as a pianist, he hoped that Vienna, at least, would listen to his compositions. He deluged the publishers with his works. But, as he afterward wrote, those that were accepted were only in-

significant bits, bringing him hardly enough to pay for cigarettes.

Like Chopin and Schumann before him, Rubinstein felt himself defeated in Vienna. He left for Berlin, and when this city, too, proved unreceptive, he returned to his native country there to begin life anew as teacher and pianist.

The next time he returned to Vienna—fifteen years later—he was hailed as one of the masters of his instrument and as the greatest composer since Beethoven.

## II

EMPEROR Francis died in 1835.

So complete had been his trust in God, in Habsburg, in Metternich, in the divine right of kings and in the stupidity of the people that he permitted the crown to descend upon the half-wit head of his eldest son, Ferdinand. Francis had more than once during his lifetime been urged to alter the succession in favor of one of his saner offspring. But consistency (if not wisdom) and reverence for the sacredness of descent prevailed upon him.

Two days before the Emperor's death, his will was presented to Ferdinand. It read:

Do not shift the foundations of the edifice of the State. Reign, and change nothing; plant yourself firmly and unswervingly in the soil of the principles by whose constant observance I not only guided the Monarchy through storm and stress, but also secured for it the high place which it occupies in the world.

The face is the face of Francis; but the hand that penned these lines was that of Metternich.

## The document concluded:

Confer upon Prince Metternich, my most faithful servant and friend, the same trust as I bestowed on him through such a wide span of years. Do not make any decisions on public policy or on personal matters without listening to his counsels. On the other hand, impress upon him the duty to act toward you with the same sincerity and true devotion as he has always shown me.

Rarely before in history had the principles of the divine right of kings and of legitimacy been given quite so ironic—if somewhat naïve—confirmation. The divinity which hedged Ferdinand's crown was of an unflattering quality. Ferdinand possessed the mind of a child of three, with but one difference: he could write. Incapable of either learning or understanding anything, he could still sign his name. And sign it to documents he did, with a childish glee and abandon that must have proved delightful to watch.

Over the innocent soul of the idiot king was placed a watch, consisting of Metternich, Kolowrat and Archduke Louis; but it was evident to everyone at court that the furious battle for its possession was to be waged only between Metternich and Kolowrat.

There was something diabolically heroic in this enthronement of a half-wit. It proved conclusively that the Metternich "system" was here to stay. Only a few skeptics shook their heads sadly, seeing no way out. One of them, Baron Marschall, was heard to remark: "If we march with the spirit of the times, we shall fall to pieces; if we do not, we are going to be crushed." Many years before, Napoleon had stated that the Habsburgs were always too late—"either with an army or an idea." History was to show that such tardiness was costly indeed.

In February, 1848, a breathless courier employed by Baron Rothschild brought a disquieting dispatch. The Parisians had risen again—this time against Louis Philippe, and had driven him, too, from the throne. The whirlwind, prepared by the Congress of Vienna and more than thirty years of the oppressive system, now swept all over Europe. Its immediate impetus was the general rise in the cost of living in the years preceding—occasioned by bad harvests, and the terrible bank and industrial crisis in England which, in 1847, bankrupted land banks and closed factories. Almost as if by pre-arrangement, uprisings flared up everywhere. In Germany, in Italy, in England and in that greatest stronghold of reaction—Austria.

In Vienna blindness preceded the storm, though hunger and poverty walked the streets, though thousands were refusing to pay the burdensome taxes in defiance of arrest and dispossession, though Louis Philippe, on a visit to the city, had clearly seen the signs of danger ahead. On March 11 the court was assured by Police President Sedlnitzky that nothing would happen. Two days later, on the occasion of the meeting of the Provincial Estates in Vienna, the crowds were already in the streets. Metternich was unperturbed. He ordered the crowds dispersed. There was a scuffle. The military fired. And the Revolution of 1848 had come to Vienna.

“Down with Metternich!” cried the students, lawyers, workers, artisans and merchants. And they sang:

*O Metternich, o Metternich,  
Ich wollte dass das Wetter dich  
Tief in den Boden schlage!*

Metternich, oh Metternich  
Would to God that a quick  
Bolt of lightning strike you!

In quick succession demands were pressed on the court: resignation of Metternich, resignation of Sedlnitzky; freedom of speech and press, a constitution!

In the Hofburg there was chaos. Advice countered advice. But there was no doubt in anyone's mind that Metternich must go. On his sickbed Ferdinand issued a proclamation convoking an advisory assembly—but already it was too late. On March 15 the citizens' committee, under the leadership of Alexander Bach, captured the City Hall and became ruler of the city. The Emperor capitulated, granted every demand. And the court fled.

In the provinces matters were even more serious. Under the leadership of Kossuth the Hungarians had revolted and soon obtained what they desired: a ministry responsible to Parliament, popular suffrage, abolition of feudal privileges, liberation of serfs, freedom of speech and press. On June 12 Prague revolted.

In these months of ferment, of rising and envisioned victory, a new liberal government was formed in Vienna under Baron Weissenberg, and its minister of justice was Alexander Bach. On July 22 the Austrian Parliament convened in the Spanish Riding School.

But counterrevolution was not asleep. It had merely waited, waited for signs of disunity and confusion, fomenting these wherever possible, according to the old principle *Divide et impera*. It had set Slav against Magyar; German against Czech; bourgeois against worker. The forces opposed to the people had all the advantages of "organization, discipline and habitual authority." And in the rank of the insurgents there *were* divisions.

Swiftly now the hammer bore down. The revolt in Italy was crushed by Radetzky; that in Prague, by Windischgrätz, who now marched on Vienna at the head of 60,000 troops. For five days he besieged it. Had

it not been for treachery and sabotage within, he might not so soon have taken it. On October 31 he entered Vienna, and immediately thereafter the executioner began his work.

The next task of the counterrevolution was to remove the Emperor and find a legitimate successor. The court camarilla under Windischgrätz fixed upon Ferdinand's nephew, Francis Joseph, son of Archduke Francis Charles. It would be necessary to overcome the latter's scruples, since he was the legitimate heir to the throne. A vision in which the Emperor Francis himself appeared might serve to sway the weak-minded but stubborn Archduke—and a vision he had. At night, a gaunt courtier impersonated the father, and with persuasive words urged the son to do the right thing.

On the morning of December 2, 1848, the entire court was summoned to the episcopal palace at Olmütz. At eight o'clock in the morning the Emperor Ferdinand, the Empress at his side, emerged from their private apartment and appeared before a brilliant assemblage of Austrian nobility. After them came the Archduchess Sophie, the Archduke Francis Charles, and their eighteen-year-old son, Francis Joseph.

The Emperor was given a parchment which he unrolled and read:

Weighty considerations have led us to the irrevocable decision of renouncing the Imperial Crown. The renunciation is made in favor of our beloved nephew, his Serene Highness Archduke Francis Joseph, whom we now declare to have attained his majority.

Francis Joseph stepped forward and kneeled before the Emperor. The older man stroked the blond head of the new emperor and whispered to him: "That which I have done, I have done willingly. Do your duty."

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BOOK FOUR

RADETZKY MARCH

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FRANCIS JOSEPH, "the last successor of Charlemagne," had been carefully groomed for this impressive moment. His mother, the ambitious and clever Sophie of Bavaria, had spared no pains to inculcate in him a sense of his great destiny. She had watched over him with the solicitude of a Habsburg. The little Archduke learned fast. Since military drill and routine were placed first in the household, he soon developed the systematic and disciplined viewpoint of any army corporal. To the end of his days he loved the pomp and state of parades, the blare of military bands, the salutes of privates. He remained, in the words of an astute, if unkind, critic, "a subaltern in a field marshal's uniform." Nor was his religious education neglected. The pious, pedestrian and fanatical Henry de Bombelles, and later Abbé Rauscher, saw to it that the heir to the throne of the Habsburgs was filled with the proper reverence for Rome and for the Jesuits; at the same time they nurtured within him a deep distrust of all reform and enlightenment.

Though he was named Francis Joseph, it was the ghost of Francis that was strong within him. Always with him was the memory of his illustrious grandfather. There was in him no trace of the liberal spirit of Joseph. Francis Joseph was here to wipe out once and for all the shame of 1848 which had forced his uncle to flee—in short, he was here to restore the "system."

The "system" rested on the mighty shoulders of three generals: Radetzky, who had crushed the Italians; Windischgrätz, who had besieged and captured Vienna;

and the Slav Jellachich, who had fought, and was still fighting, the Hungarians.

Forgetfulness of vows made in days of distress was the weakness of royal houses other than the Habsburgs. But the latter's consistency in this respect is sometimes incredible. When their days of strength returned, they looked around, were ashamed of their weakness and sought to reclaim what had slipped from their grasp. In their hour of need they had promised the people a "constitution" and an elective Parliament; and while there was still danger they allowed their Austrians to toy with the word and the deed.

Late in the evening of March 6, 1849, the awakening came. An imperial decree dissolved the Parliament. The hour of reaction had struck once more. The order of dissolution cited the sins of the Assembly and included a candid if ominous sentence: "We trust in the gallantry and honor of the army."

Simultaneously, the Emperor published the "new" constitution—a document so hypocritical and sardonic as to remain perhaps the most vivid testimony of the "honorableness" of the monarchy. It abolished the independence of Hungary; it "promised" a central elected Parliament, trial by jury, civil liberties. The date for elections by provincial assemblies was set for the autumn of 1850. The constitution was an "improvisation," a "promise"—a patchwork quilt wrought by the hands of a clique consisting of half-baked liberals and the archreactionaries Windischgrätz and Schwarzenberg. Not one of its authors really meant it to be taken seriously. It would merely do as a token until the rebellious ardor had been quenched.

And it had not yet been quenched. It was one thing to abolish Hungarian independence; it was another to convince the Hungarians of the fact. Windischgrätz—whose gallantry as general was gained in the war against a few hundred Viennese students and workers, and in the bloodier aftermath against the disarmed citizenry—met defeat after defeat at the hands of the “rebels” under the inspired leadership of Kossuth.

There was no way out. If the Hungarians were to be crushed, there would have to be an appeal to outside help. Good Czar Nicholas proved an obliging benefactor. He sent 80,000 Russians. Within six weeks all was over.

It may be said that the accession of Francis Joseph was baptized in blood. Prisoners of war were butchered. Thirteen generals were executed. The reign of terror continued for a month, and the brutality of General Haynau, whose acts were approved by the Emperor, shocked even the Russians.

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What was the matter with the Viennese? Why did they not once during the first years of the Emperor's reign cheer him so lustily as they had his good old grandfather? And what newfangled madness was it that drove a Hungarian tailor, Libényi, to make an attempt on the life of the Emperor on February 18, 1853? The Emperor escaped . . . and his aristocratic friends commemorated the miracle with the erection of the Votivkirche. But why did the unruly populace, after Libényi's execution on Simmering Heath, continue to chant a popular verse concerning a clumsy tailor?

*Auf der Simmeringer Haad'  
 Hat's ein Schneider verwahrt,  
 'S g'schiecht eahm schon recht,  
 Warum sticht er so schlecht?*

On Simmering Heath,  
 The storm blew away a tailor.  
 Serves him right!  
 Why is he so clumsy with the needle?

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## 2

As if unaware of the threatening storm or, if aware, as if intent on shutting out all thoughts of danger and all sounds of warning, Vienna continued its feverish gaiety.

*Muntre Feste, Schmäuse, Tänze,  
 Volle Becher, weisse Nacken  
 Süsse Ruhe, tiefer Frieden  
 In dem Lande der Phäaken.*

*Von dem Finger an der Wand,  
 Von der Mene-Tekel Mahnung,  
 Von dem Popanz Politik,  
 Hatte Wien noch keine Ahnung.*

Feasting, banquets and gay dancing,  
 Goblets full and bosoms white,  
 Sweet quiescence, and deep peace,  
 In the land of the Phæacians.

Of the writing on the wall,  
 Of the Mene-Tekel warning,  
 Of the bugbear, scarecrow statesmen,  
 Vienna had as yet no inkling.

Thus runs a familiar poem by Eduard Bauernfeld.

In the popular theater, in *heuriger* wine and café-house gossip, in the ballet dancing of Fanny Elssler and

the waltzes of Lanner and Johann Strauss the true Viennese found refuge from the turbulence of the times.

The critic, Eduard Hanslick, wrote many years later:

I have lived through the last years of the pre-March days in Vienna, and I have some very valuable recollections. How petty was the musical life at the end of the thirties and at the beginning of the forties! . . . Excluded from all intellectual pre-occupations, the Viennese public threw itself with eagerness upon the purely entertaining and distracting in art. Not only did the theaters prosper; they formed the kernel of conversation, the most important columns in the journals. For lack of political organs, the Viennese read with astonishing seriousness the *Theaterzeitung* and the *Humorist*, etc. In the musical domain, Italian opera ruled, virtuosity and the Waltz. Strauss and Lanner were idolized. . . . Today, few can imagine the enthusiastic frenzy which they aroused in Vienna. That this sweetly lulling dance in three-quarter time, together with the Italian opera and the worship of virtuosity, did much to make the Viennese more and more incapable of intellectual exertion, can be readily understood. . . .

Strauss, Lanner, and the Waltz. . . .

Curious persons have estimated that at least one-quarter of the population in Vienna danced regularly. At the Mondscheinsaal, at the Neue Welt, at the Sperlsaal in the Leopoldstadt, and at the incomparably magnificent (and somewhat disreputable) Apollopalast in the Schottenfeld, Vienna danced.

Long before 1848 dancing meant the waltzes of Joseph Lanner, the waltzes of Johann Strauss senior. Each wrote in his own idiom. The older man's music—many claimed—"flattered the Viennese heart," while the younger rival's "commanded the feet."

They were incapable of working together very long. The talent of Strauss began asserting itself, quietly at first, then more and more arrogantly. Each had to go his own way; Lanner to be superseded by his younger partner, and Strauss, eventually, by his own son.

At the Bock they were together for the last time. At the Bock they quarreled bitterly and their partisans fought fiercely. At the Bock they parted. . . .

Lanner or Strauss?

Lanner had taken the waltz, the great possibilities of which had already been suggested by Weber and Schubert, and had developed it to its full growth. Schubert before him had proved that the waltz was not merely for the feet but for the ears as well. And Hummel had composed a waltz for the opening of the Apollopalast which combined several different waltzes into one unified fabric. In Lanner's hands the waltz went even further. It was no longer the sixteen-bar melody. He brought together themes of varying moods and fused them. The introduction announced the theme of the principal waltz; the coda served as a summation.

The first Johann Strauss had brought to the waltz of Lanner freshness and a richness of invention, so that the best of his waltzes acquired a personality and individuality of their own.

Already in 1830 Strauss senior had two hundred musicians under him; and the Sperl Redoutensaal had engaged him for six years. Here, Heinrich Laube, the German writer, saw and heard him in 1833.

In the garden, a thousand lights; all salons are open. Strauss is conducting. Fireworks gleam and flicker; every shrub comes to life. Whoever has a heart, makes his way across the Ferdinand bridge. . . . One evening and half a night at Sperl's—when the gardens are in full bloom—is the key to Vienna's physical life. At innumerable tables under illuminated trees and open arcades, they sit, eat, drink, gossip, laugh and listen. In the center is the orchestra, whence come the new waltzes, to the boundless irritation of our learned musicians, these new waltzes which, like the sting of a tarantula, creep into your blood. In the middle of a garden, at the head of the orchestra, stands Austria's new hero—*le Napoléon autrichien*—conductor, Johann Strauss. . . .

All eyes are fixed on him. . . . The man is dark as a Moor; his hair is curly, the mouth well-formed, energetic. The nose is somewhat flat.

Characteristic is the beginning of every dance. Strauss begins his tremulous preludes which seem to pant for full expression; they sound as sad as happiness about to be born. . . . The Viennese draws his girl closer to him, and they glide and sway to his measures. . . . Suddenly a shattering trill breaks forth; the dance itself commences with raging speed. And into the whirlpool rushes the dancing pair.

Young Richard Wagner, then in his nineteenth year, and on a brief visit to Vienna, wrote:

The waltz is a stronger narcotic than alcohol. At the first stroke of the bow the hearers are inflamed.

And again:

I shall never forget the passions bordering on mad fury with which the wonderful Johann Strauss conducted. This daemon of the ancient Viennese folk-spirit trembled at the beginning of a new waltz like a python preparing to spring, and it was more the ecstasy produced by the music than the drinks among the enchanted audience that stimulated that magical first violin to almost dangerous flights.

The world outside beckoned: Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Amsterdam. And wherever he came, the repetition: vertigo, delirium, passion. In Paris, Louis Philippe was his host, and Cherubini, Auber and Berlioz his admirers. Berlioz even went so far as to set Strauss by the side of Beethoven, Gluck and Weber! The mad pace continued across the Channel. He played at the coronation of Queen Victoria, and she—a passionate dancer—never grew weary of his waltzes.

Concert upon concert. In London alone seventy-two performances! The mad rush from city to city. The passionate thirst for applause and admiration.

On his return he collapsed at Calais, and when he arrived in Vienna he was very ill.

THE man of the world began to feel imprisoned. There was his wife, Anna, whom he had married in 1825, and by whom he had three sons and two daughters. As his fame grew and as he wandered far and wide, she receded into the background. He became more and more the stranger in his own house. Then, suddenly, he fell in love with a modiste, Emilie Trampusch, and went to live with her in the dismal Kumpfgasse.

His oldest son, Johann, had even before the break disturbed his father's peace. He wanted to be a musician. With grimness the elder Johann set himself against the boy. Anything but that! Little Johann had talent and brains. He could easily become a respected state official. A musician—what was he? An outcast. If successful, a wanderer, a gypsy; and if not—worse than a beggar. Outwardly little Johann seemed convinced. He attended the Schottengymnasium, and even entered a commercial academy. But his father could not know that he was studying the violin with Amon, one of the elder Strauss' musicians. The mother, of course, knew and watched.

She was a generous woman, energetic, sincere and proud. Her musical taste—untutored as it was—was keen enough to appreciate Wagner. She was hurt by her husband's estrangement. His desertion might have broken her, had she not had the children—and Johann especially—to think of. As it was, she set out to rebuild the demolished house.

For Johann, his father's departure meant liberation. He would devote himself to music now. He had already

composed his first waltz when he was six, and now he knew he wanted to be like his father—a composer of waltzes, a conductor of café-house music. His teacher, Joseph Drechsler, who admired his talent, tried unsuccessfully to turn him to more serious work—cantatas, oratorios, symphonies. But Johann was determined. Was it an almost unconscious desire for revenge that prompted him to challenge his father's preeminence? The letter he wrote him was stiff and formal: "I have decided to devote my talents, which I owe to my own mother, to her who would now otherwise be left unprotected and helpless."

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT!

##### Invitation to a *Soirée Dansante*

which will take place on the 15th of October, 1844, even in inclement weather in Dommayer's Casino in Hietzing. Johann Strauss (the son) will have the honor of directing his own orchestra for the first time and in addition to various overtures and opera pieces, he will perform several of his own compositions.

The elder Strauss was disturbed. Once it had been Strauss and Lanner. And now—Strauss against Strauss. Nor did the rumors of excitement in Vienna allay his fears. It was a good stroke on the part of Dommayer to set son against father. Unwilling to go himself, the elder Strauss sent his friend, Lampenhirsch, to report on the first concert.

Lampenhirsch had plenty to rehearse. It seemed as if all Vienna had turned out toward Schönbrunn. On this day, the fifteenth of October, it was more crowded than ever. "It was more difficult to obtain a table than a seat in the English House of Lords," a journal reported.

Friends and enemies were there. And in the audience sat young Strauss's mother.

At last, Johann Strauss himself. Tall, handsome and elegant, he had the dark deep eyes and firm chin of his mother. His gestures and manners with the bow—the rhythmical movements of his body—were those of his father.

Now he swings the bow, now he strikes up, one, two, three. . . . An electric current runs through us, from top to toe, and now that man above us behaves like a galvanic battery, sparkles. And now a cry resounds: "This is a worthy son of his father. . . ."

The crowd was impatient. It liked Auber's overture to *La Muette de Portici*, but it was waiting for the polkas, quadrilles, and especially the waltzes. The *Gunstwerber*, the *Herzenslust* polka, the *Debutsquadrille* and, finally, the *Sinngedichtewalzer*. Nineteen times he had to repeat the last of these!

Herr Wiest, editor of the *Wanderer*, wrote: "These Viennese! Exactly as they were ten years ago. A new waltz player—a piece of world history!" And he added: "Good night, Lanner! Good evening, Father Strauss! Good morning, Son Strauss!"

Strauss against Strauss. Father against son. They opposed each other in their respective café-houses, each gathering about him his own ardent partisans. They even opposed each other politically. In 1848, when Europe was startled out of its equanimity by the pent-up rage of an oppressed people, father Strauss espoused the cause of the imperial house, and wore his regimental red. The son, captivated by revolutionary ardor, wore the blue of the National Guard. The cannon of Windischgrätz's besieging army roared, and one of the shots

destroyed the Strauss home in Leopoldstadt. The father composed a military march—the celebrated *Radetzky March*—which was to quicken the hearts of loyal soldiers until 1918. The son composed a revolutionary march. In those fervid days, the father was hooted; and in Frankfurt, a bellicose audience demanded that he play Berlioz's *Rakoczy March*, which had inflamed revolting Hungary.

But when the elder Strauss returned to Vienna from a triumphant tour abroad, the fist of Habsburg had almost restored quiet. The Viennese settled down to the business of living—and dancing. The sins of the father were forgiven and forgotten. The more serious sins of the son—well, they were forgotten too.

Radetzky was to arrive in Vienna. It was fitting that Johann Strauss, senior, be entrusted with the musical reception. One day before the festive occasion, he caught scarlet fever from one of the children. On the twenty-third of September, 1849, he was dead. Emilie Trampusch, by whom he had had three daughters and one son, took up her children and fled in panic. Johann Strauss rushed to the house in the Kumpfgasse and found his father lying dead on the floor, half-naked.

He was buried next to Joseph Lanner, who had died seven years before. Eduard Bauernfeld, who detested the composer's political views, wrote a touching elegy. "Today," he said, "we are burying old Vienna."

In the Volksgarten, the new king was crowned in October. Johann Strauss, the son, was now the leader of his father's orchestra. There was now only one Johann Strauss, only one waltz king. And for the next half century he was the musical ruler of Vienna.

EVEN as Mars was sounding his first warnings, the Emperor of the Austrians succumbed to Venus. He fell in love with his cousin, Elizabeth, daughter of Duke Max of Bavaria. Francis Joseph was twenty-three, handsome with his steel-blue eyes, his reddish-blond hair and his small mustache. In his military uniform he was irresistible, and had broken more than one woman's heart. Elizabeth was sixteen, and one of the most beautiful of European princesses. He was the wealthiest of monarchs, the most desirable of bachelors; she was poor. She did not love him, but her mother had bent her will. In April, 1854, they were married in the church of the Augustine monks. Thereafter all was disaster.

Francis Joseph was a soldier, with the soldier's profound reverence for order and obedience. He was one of the most powerful of European monarchs, whose every wish was command. His wife was a beautiful, wild, young colt whom he was setting out to tame. At her home, in Possenhofen, she had been brought up like a boy, had lived her own life, had hunted, ridden, danced, and come and gone as she pleased. For the Possenhofen household, under the irresponsible and eccentric father, had not been noted either for careful husbandry or for order. Of his legitimate offspring (and he had many bastard children), Max preferred this untamable girl. He pampered her, allowed her all freedom; in fact, he joined her in her escapades. And now, here at the court of the Habsburgs, she felt stifled—married to the man

she did not love, beset by underlings who watched her every gesture and movement and who were always ready to carry tales to her imperious mother-in-law. Whether it was the matter of wearing gloves for dinner (she hated gloves) or going out shopping without an escort; whether it was her wild passion for horses (she was an incomparable horsewoman) or her lonely walks in the country; whether it was her request for a bathroom (unheard of in the Habsburg palaces) or a demand for her favorite authors—Goethe, Byron and the Jew, Heine—whatever she liked aroused scandal, comment and reproof. She had a will of her own. She set it boldly against that of her implacable mother-in-law and against that of Francis Joseph who, despite his love for her, treated her with the condescension of an army officer. Wherever she turned there were enemies and spies and eavesdroppers.

She was not used to these Habsburg ways. The Habsburg house was filled with distrust, vacillation, *Schlamperei* and oppression. Disorder mingled with method, willfulness with lack of will.

The new Empress of Austria bit her beautiful lip, shook her marvelous copper locks in rebellion and kept back her tears. But she felt weak and alone.

For a time she was destined for even greater humiliations. She bore two daughters—an offense not easily condoned. When one of these died, her enemies could not but see the hand of God directed against the evildoer. Sophie recognized in all this only a fulfillment of her premonitions. At court Elizabeth was given to understand that an empress who bears no heir to the throne is doomed to remain a stranger.

But in 1858 Elizabeth blasted the fondest hopes of her ill-wishers. She gave birth to a son. He was named Rudolph, after the founder of the House of Habsburg.

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The tragedy of the House of Habsburg unfolds slowly.

The first act stretches across the years 1863 to 1867, and since its chief character is something of a Don Quixote, it is not free from comic elements. This Don Quixote died, not in bed, but before a firing squad in distant Mexico. This Don Quixote was a Habsburg—the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian.

Two years younger than his brother Francis Joseph, Maximilian was in every way the antipode of the Emperor. He was volatile, restless, imaginative and poetic. Feeling, rather than reason, ruled him. His brief life was a romantic hunger. His feverish imagination transcended the limitations of time and circumstances. Had he been content to live in the imagination, all might have gone well. But Don Quixote sallied out into the world in pursuit of his heart's desire. And the world outside proved his undoing.

In 1861, Napoleon III decided to intervene in the affairs of Mexico. He desired no less than to establish a monarchy and reinstate the power of large landowners and French bankers. The idea of turning Mexico into a French dependency—and a possible source of great revenue—proved attractive to him. And at this moment it seemed very simple of realization, since the United States was engaged in a civil war and could not be expected to interfere.

The imperialists and adventurers sought out their standard-bearer, and found him at the Habsburg court.

Don Quixote's dream had come true. He was to be Emperor of the Mexicans!

Napoleon III, whom his own countrymen disdainfully called the "parrot with a great name for a perch," sent an expeditionary force to crush the revolutionary Juarez and his followers. In the spring of 1864, the "white savior" Maximilian, accompanied by his wife, Carlotta, set sail. Sober voices had counseled prudence; but the inner voice to which he hearkened had proved too strong, too enchanting.

El Dorado was not the golden dream he had dreamed. The roads were unpassable and the empire was still to be won. But Don Quixote swept on, driven by his inner dream, looking neither to right nor to left. He, who had been sent to restore the Church and property and establish a monarchy, suddenly conceived of himself as the liberator of the people, who would free the peons, grant liberty of conscience, secularize and divide church possessions. Why, he would approach Juarez, and together they would rule a free and happy Mexico!

Even as he was thinking these mad thoughts, his friends were abandoning him. Under threatened action by the United States, Napoleon hastened to withdraw his troops. Maximilian was left to his bitter destiny. He might have escaped, but the madness which was upon him now could be cured only by death. And what madness did not accomplish, treachery did.

He was betrayed into the hands of Juarez by one of his own followers. On June 19, 1867, he was executed. Carlotta was then in Europe, pleading his cause before the Pope, and she escaped his fate only to court a much worse one—insanity.

In that one moment when he faced the firing squad, the folly of his life passed over into heroism. In his last words and act his unpredictable deeds of a lifetime became transfused into that splendid madness which is neighbor to greatness.

"Mexicans!" he said, "men of my kind are destined by Providence to be either the redeemers of their peoples, or else their martyrs. I came to you with the purest intentions, invited by high-minded men, like those who share death with me today. On the threshold of the world beyond, I am comforted by the thought that I am not abandoned by my beloved and faithful generals. May my blood be the last to be shed, and may it bring peace and happiness to my unhappy adopted fatherland."

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WHILE the Mexican comic tragedy was drawing to a fateful end, Francis Joseph provided the House of Habsburg with a ghastly interlude—the Seven Weeks' War with Prussia.

If Maximilian dreamed of a Habsburg empire in the West, Francis Joseph, too, had his dream—the reestablishment of Habsburg supremacy among the Germans in Europe. It was a dream as old as the Habsburgs—but at no time was it farther from realization than at this moment. For the adversary was strong, cunning and young. At the helm of Prussia stood Otto von Bismarck, and the leader of its army was Helmuth von Moltke.

The conflict was brief and disastrous. When the treaty of Prague was signed in 1866, Emperor Francis Joseph was thirty-six years old. He looked back upon

his eighteen years' rule: the disorders of 1848, three wars, the loss of Lombardy and Venetia, the present unrest in his country and difficulties within his own home. The bitter lessons he had learned he expressed in a few simple words: "I have an unlucky hand."

It was characteristic of him that he blamed not himself, not his politics, not his vacillations, not the everlasting *Schlamperei*—but his ill luck.

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During the Carnival of 1867, Vienna danced.

The Prussians had the year before smashed Austria's army and had almost marched on Vienna.

But the Viennese said: "*Die Welt ist ein Komödienhaus.*"—"The world is a comic theater."

From Mexico came news of imminent disaster.

"*Der Weaner geht net unter.*"—"The Viennese will never perish."

While there is wine to be drunk, and waltzes to be danced to, things cannot be hopeless. What of the humiliation at Königgrätz? What of Austrian pride shattered at Villafranca? Somehow Vienna would survive.

"*Der Weaner geht net unter!*"

## 6

ONE day in October, 1862, Johannes Brahms made his way to the Schulerstrasse and stopped in front of 653. For a few minutes he gazed reverently at the house in which Mozart had composed *Figaro*. Then he climbed

the dark staircase, stopped before one of the doors, and knocked.

"Herr Epstein?" he asked. "I am Brahms."

Julius Epstein was, after Karl Tausig, the greatest of Viennese pianists. He combined true generosity with great artistry. Friends had spoken to him of the young Hamburg composer, Johannes Brahms, concerning whom none other than Schumann had written that he was the "loftiest expression of the times."

"I am Brahms," the young man said simply.

(In this very same house, many years before, a young man had appeared before Mozart and had said: "My name is Beethoven.")

Julius Epstein looked at the manuscripts which Brahms had brought with him. "Hellmesberger must see these," he said after studying them carefully. "Hellmesberger can do much for you."

Joseph Hellmesberger was Vienna's first violinist, founder and leader of a famous string quartet, concert-master of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, and something of the city's musical legislator. In 1848 he had conducted the Philharmonic Orchestra for a year. Then, when the Conservatory of Music in Vienna, which had been affiliated with the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, was reorganized in 1851, he was appointed its director and professor of the violin.

Some days later Hellmesberger saw the manuscript of the G-minor piano quartet. His words, too, were simple: "*Das ist der Erbe Beethovens.*"—"This is Beethoven's heir."

On the sixteenth of November, 1862, Hellmesberger's musicians performed the G-minor quartet in the hall of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, with Brahms himself

at the piano. The audience preferred Brahms the pianist to Brahms the composer. One critic thought the music "gloomy, obscure, and ill-developed," and spoke of the last movement as "an offense against the laws of style. There is neither precedent nor excuse for introducing into chamber music a movement conceived throughout in the style of a folk-dance."

Brahms's friends in Vienna were disappointed. The pianists, Tausig and Epstein, and the composer, Peter Cornelius, had hoped that Brahms's first appearance would establish his reputation here. How could Vienna remain untouched by the proud affirmation of Brahms's piano writing, by the profound emotion of his soaring strings? The heroic outlines of his form they mistook for pretentiousness; the sensitive, elegiac musing of his slow movement for ponderous gloom!

But Epstein was not dismayed. "You must give still another concert," he urged, "one of your own." And when Brahms proved reluctant, Epstein rented the auditorium of the Gesellschaft for the twenty-ninth of November.

At this second concert the Hellmesberger group, with Brahms at the piano, performed the A-major piano quartet; a number of Brahms's *Lieder* were sung; and Brahms performed the works of Schumann and Bach, and his own *Variations on a Theme of Handel*.

His works did not take Vienna by storm as his friends had anticipated. But neither was there that hostility and blindness which some years before had driven Schumann away. Eduard Hanslick, dictator of Vienna's musical taste, wrote disparagingly of the new quartet and its "brooding reflection." But others were more hospitable. Brahms wrote home enthusiastically:

After the quartet had been received most favorably, I had an extraordinary success as a pianist. Every number met with the greatest applause. . . . You ought to see how attentive they were, and you should have heard the applause.

Brahms soon grew to love the city, and was fascinated by its life and history. "I live not more than ten paces from the Prater, and can drink my wine in the same place as Beethoven." He had many friends, his life was gay. He loved to eat, drink and talk. The restaurant Gause or the tavern Zum Kronprinzen saw him and his garrulous crew frequently.

Musical life in Vienna was rich. A new symphony orchestra—the Vienna Philharmonic—founded twenty years before by Otto Nicolai, now gave eight subscription concerts each season at the Kärntnertor-theater under the direction of the capable Felix Otto Dessooff. At the Court Opera, conductors like Heinrich Esser and Felix Otto Dessooff had freshened the repertoire and revitalized the performances. The concerts of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde were directed by Johann Herbeck, who also conducted the Singverein, a choral society founded as an adjunct body of the Gesellschaft. Then there was the rival, but by no means comparable, Singakademie, which had been founded in 1858. Concerts by the great virtuosos of Europe were not infrequent events. For chamber music there was always the great quartet led by Joseph Hellmesberger.

Additional performances of Brahms's music in Vienna brought him a slowly increasing reputation. The Hellmesberger group introduced his first sextet. There was applause at the concert and praise by a few critics, one of whom went so far as to proclaim the composer Beethoven's successor. A few months later, Brahms's Second

Serenade (Opus 16) was scheduled for performance by the Vienna Philharmonic. A brief disturbance at the closing rehearsal almost deprived Brahms of his first major success in Vienna. The clarinetist rose and, announcing himself the spokesman of the orchestra, protested the difficulty of the music and insisted that the majority of the musicians would refuse to perform it. The conductor, Dessoff, burst into a rage. Then and there he offered his resignation. Several other members of the orchestra, including Concertmaster Hellmesberger and the first flutist, offered to resign as well. This immediately quelled the rebellion. Somewhat grumblingly the clarinetist yielded. The orchestra, he said, would give the work one more trial. At the concert the work went well and was enthusiastically applauded; even the critics were warm in its praise. Hanslick, hitherto captious about Brahms's gifts, now openly proclaimed him a master.

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Almost ten years before this, Johannes Brahms had come upon Schumann's works. He knew from that moment that he must see and speak to the man who had composed them. He traveled to Düsseldorf and there met with the warmth and openness which epitomized the household of Robert and Clara Schumann. For them he played his first piano sonata, which so struck them that Robert Schumann hastened to reveal his discovery to the world. The article in Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* was entitled "New Paths." Seldom has an older master given such unstinted praise to a younger and completely unknown man. At the cradle of Brahms, said Schumann, "the Graces and

heroes stood guard." As a more tangible gift, Schumann gave Brahms a letter to his publishers, Breitkopf and Härtel.

Other and greater gifts followed. If Schumann stood godfather to Brahms's works, Clara was the guardian angel. What she was to mean to the young musician, no one—not even Brahms himself—could fully understand. But from that first moment when he had touched the piano, and when Robert had interrupted him so that Clara, too, might hear his music—from that moment she stood with him, giving him advice, direction and encouragement.

Then, suddenly, in February of 1854, Robert Schumann went insane and was confined to a sanatorium near Bonn. Two years later he was dead. Clara Schumann then wrote in her diary: "With his passing, goes all my happiness. A new life now begins for me." And Brahms, who was with her when the blow came, felt the loss only less bitterly than she. Between his first meeting with Clara and this fatal day, he had drawn close to her. Through her he had become, as he himself had confessed, "better and nobler." He had even fallen in love with this woman, who was fourteen years older than he. And now that Schumann was dead and the choice was to be made, Brahms did what he was to do ever thereafter in like trials—nothing. What fear it was that pursued him we can only surmise. She was too great-hearted, too keen and sensitive to question him. She understood.

In 1857 Brahms was appointed choirmaster at the little court in Detmold, where he worked hard, grew as an artist, but chafed considerably at the stupidly formal etiquette. Already his eyes were fixed on other

places, for his reputation had grown. In 1859 he performed his own first piano concerto in Hanover under the direction of his friend, Joseph Joachim. And when he finally broke with Detmold, he had a trunkful of compositions. Back in Hamburg, he waited, hoping that his own birthplace might have room for him. But Hamburg remained indifferent. When the famous Viennese singer, Luise Dustmann, arrived and spoke with warmth about her favorite city, he made up his mind.

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Life in Vienna he found *recht gemütlich*, and not without enticements. But he yearned for permanency. Always he hated the uncertain itinerant life of the musician. His middle-class good sense craved security and comfort, and these Vienna was not yet ready to offer him. For a moment he thought that he might be called back to Hamburg. The conductorship of the Hamburg Singakademie and the Philharmonic Orchestra was vacant. He waited, hoping that his native city might claim him now. Again he was to suffer disappointment. Stockhausen, the singer, was elected to the post.

Distressed, he voiced his grief to Clara. "You know how they'd rather treat us: let us roam through the whole wide world." He asked for quiet, and ties which would bind him to a place. Clara's encouraging reply failed to soothe him:

You are still very young, dear Johannes. You will find a permanent niche yet. And "if a man has a loving wife with him, he finds heaven in every town." My husband said that so beautifully in his short poems, and you will certainly find not only a home but also domestic happiness—and everything.

He was off again, to Hanover to visit Joachim and his bride; home to Hamburg. It was here that he received

a formal invitation to return to Vienna and assume the direction of the Singakademie. He accepted, but not without misgivings. "I am terribly timid," he wrote, "at putting my talent in this department to the test—in Vienna, of all places." But his desire for a permanent connection decided him.

In the fall he was back in Vienna. His first choral concert, which took place on November 15 at the Redoutensaal, included works of Bach, Beethoven, Schumann as well as his own four-part arrangements of folk songs. It was a successful concert. Brahms had worked earnestly, put the chorus through rigorous rehearsal, and the performance had exceeded any previous effort of the Singakademie. But the second concert, consisting of *a cappella* music, proved too funereal for the gay Viennese. And the third concert, devoted to Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, suffered by comparison with the more elaborate and finished performances of the rival Singverein under Herbeck.

Brahms was dissatisfied with himself and with Vienna. The rivalry between the Singakademie and the Singverein had created bad blood between himself and Herbeck. Brahms detested such personal antagonisms and decided to retire from his position. Not even the flattering offer of a contract for three years could hold him.

IN VIENNA the paths of Brahms and Richard Wagner crossed.

Wagner arrived in the city on May 9, 1861. Thirteen years earlier he had been here, in the fateful year of 1848, with a fantastic project for unifying the theaters of Vienna and raising their musical level. The project had then fallen through. But Wagner had been pleased with the city even in that turbulent year. "I have found Paris again," he wrote to Minna Wagner, "only more beautiful, gayer, and German."

This time he came with a heavy heart. True, he was no longer unknown in Vienna. Fragments of his works had been heard for the first time in Vienna on—of all places!—the café-house programs of Johann Strauss who, as early as 1853, had presented excerpts from *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*. "It is an interesting fact and characteristic of our musical condition," a Viennese journalist remarked ironically in 1856, "that a music lover who wants to become acquainted with Wagner . . . has to go to a dance orchestra concert." In 1857 the none too reputable Thalia Theater in the Lerchenfeld district had produced *Tannhäuser*. In desperate need of money then, and hopeful that this might serve as an entry to the coveted Burgtheater, Wagner had sanctioned the performance. But he entertained no illusions about its quality. The wits of Vienna, then as ever hostile to the newer music, found ample material for their sallies. The singers, altogether unprepared for the ordeal of a Wagnerian opera, lost their voices before the opening night; and a substitute had to be found for the Landgrave. Mockingly, critics now referred to the new opera as *Tannhäuser, dann heiser* (*Tannhäuser, then hoarse*), while they acidly commented that Fräulein Lieven, who sang Venus, was out of tune so consistently that the government could prosecute her for issuing

false notes. The scenery and costumes were scarcely calculated to add to the enjoyment of the performance. Neither the eye nor the ear was flattered.

Yet, wonder of wonders, *Tannhäuser* ran for ten nights and then, when it moved over to the roomier Josephstädtertheater, it continued for twenty-seven more performances.

The directors of the Court Opera sat up and took notice. After some hesitation they decided to produce *Lohengrin*. It was in order to witness this performance that Wagner had come to Vienna.

He arrived with hopes none too high. Behind him lay years of hardship and frustration, creation and self-fulfillment. Vivid with a sense of his greatness and power, he yet had the dismal feeling of being unrecognized and unrewarded. He had only recently completed what he knew to be the greatest of his musical dramas, *Tristan und Isolde*. Then had come the galling failure of *Tannhäuser* in Paris, the growing estrangement from Minna Wagner and enmity everywhere. Again he was foot-loose. Again he was a wanderer, forced to beg his bread.

"I feel more and more as if I had come near the end of my life's journey," he wrote to his wife from Vienna.

For a moment, it seemed, there was to be a respite. *Lohengrin*, performed at the Court Opera on May 15, evoked such enthusiasm that Wagner himself was carried away by that "intoxicating May night," as he later referred to it.

There was now talk of giving the world première of *Tristan und Isolde* in Vienna. "The people are good to me, but not one of them really knows the danger I bring them into with my *Tristan*." Apparently they realized the dangers soon enough. Delay followed delay. Irrita-

tion succeeded irritation. The work of rehearsal proved arduous beyond expectation.

To Hans von Bülow, Wagner wrote in the fall of 1861:

Here am I . . . twenty-five years married, recognized, loved and admired . . . and all my little future hangs—or rather dangles—on the lax vocal chords of a tired tenor who will neither let me live nor die. I drag around from inn to inn, and fancy myself an opera composer!

A year passed—and yet no *Tristan*!

Already his adversaries were saying that Wagner's operas were incapable of being sung. Yet his popularity in Vienna was considerable, and in bitter humor he related how under the window of his friend, Cornelius, an indefatigable hand organ ground out the *Tannhäuser March*. "And a new fashion magazine is called *Zum Lohengrin*!"

While he waited in growing despondency—saved from complete despair by the presence of his friends, Karl Tausig and Peter Cornelius—he gave three concerts of his works. When he appeared at the first of these, in December, 1862, a contemporary relates:

. . . A mighty storm of applause broke out, such as I have never before heard. Everyone clapped, cheered. Even the Empress leaned from her box and applauded. This continued for five or six minutes and then there was more thunderous applause, so that Wagner did not know how to express his thanks, and stood there, arms outstretched, resigned, until this stormy reception finally subsided.

The two concerts which followed were no less successful.

But *Tristan* did not move forward. Already there had been seventy-seven rehearsals. The tenor, Ander, was continually ailing. Only Luise Dustmann—Isolde—seemed to understand what she was doing. "Without her," Wagner confessed, "there would be no hope."

What was the use? he thought. He longed for quiet, for retirement, for a place in which he might settle and work. Here he was forced to fritter away days in fruitless expectation. New ideas were germinating within him. His mind was never at rest, and even while he despaired of *Tristan*, he was sketching other, and vaster, dramas. At the moment he was writing to Minna of his world-weariness he knew that only work could save him. "*Eine neue Arbeit musste es sein, sonst war's zu Ende.*"—"It had to be a new piece of work, otherwise it was all over with me."

In December, 1861—after his disappointment in Vienna—he left for Paris.

When I saw the prospect of a year wasted in every respect, I asked myself what I should do next. . . . Then suddenly my wonderful *Meistersinger* cropped up, and all in a moment I felt once more master of my Fate.

With passionate intensity he threw himself into the composition of the poem, and in February, 1862, he read it at the house of the publisher, Schott, in Mayence.

And while he looked forward to his Viennese venture (for the projected performance of *Tristan* had not yet been abandoned) his mind was busily at work on his new opera. In May, 1862, he suddenly came upon the idea for the marvelous prelude to the third act.

Now as a prelude to the third act, in which the curtain rises on Sachs, sitting deep in thought, I let the bass instruments play a faint, soft, deeply melancholy passage, expressive of utter resignation; then on horns and sonorous brass comes like a gospel a solemnly joyful melody of the *Wacht auf! Es ruft den Tag*, and the subject is then taken up with increasing power by the whole orchestra. I am clear now that this is my most perfect masterpiece and—that I am destined to complete it.

But the dawn which he was awaiting proved dismal. Back in Vienna, he found matters no nearer consumma-

tion. "I have never in my life," he had written to Minna some time before, "experienced such a persistent run of adversity."

"It is the same with me here as everywhere else. The jealousy of the profession is extraordinary, and they do their best to choke me off."

Hope alternated with despair. When he listened to Dustmann, he was certain of a "great, perhaps unexampled success." But again the opera was postponed, and Wagner left Vienna to conduct concerts in St. Petersburg. In April, 1863, he was back, living in comfortable quarters in Penzing.

It was in Penzing, at this time, that Wagner and Brahms met. Wagner's most intimate friends in Vienna, Karl Tausig, Standhartner and Peter Cornelius, were also friends of Brahms. It was to be expected that they would make a strong effort to bring their two favorite composers together.

Although Brahms and Wagner respected each other, they were far from fully appreciating each other's genius. Brahms had attended all three of Wagner's symphony concerts, but expressed neither approval nor disapproval. When his neighbor applauded enthusiastically, he remarked dryly: "You will spoil your gloves, my friend." Brahms was no disciple of Wagner, it was true; but no enemy, either. To Joachim, Brahms had written that he would probably be labeled a Wagnerite because he felt that a sensible person must adopt toward Wagner a serious attitude.

Wagner appeared just as coolly detached where Brahms's music was concerned. He attended a Brahms concert in January of 1863, at which he heard the

F-minor sonata and some *Lieder*, but he remained apathetic.

But now that they met in Wagner's home in Penzing—brought together by their friends—there was a certain amount of warmth and cordiality. Brahms was respectful toward his host, while Wagner, in turn, praised Brahms's *Variations on a Theme of Handel*. It was a polite meeting, but to their friends a disappointing one. It was clear that the two greatest composers of the day were destined to go their separate ways.

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*Tristan* faded more and more into the distance. . . . But once more "he spread the *Meistersinger* open" on his Erard piano and proceeded to complete the score. And almost simultaneously he worked upon the second and third portions of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

In the fall of 1863 Luise Dustmann fell ill. All hopes for a performance of *Tristan und Isolde* were now permanently shattered. Only work could save him now.

If I could only finish my *Meistersinger* now! So I sigh from my inmost soul! This work has an extraordinary attraction for me. In it there appears for the first time an element of cheerfulness, a delight in gay and graceful detail, quite absent in my earlier passionate [operas]. I believe that undisturbed work upon this opera would be my salvation, would make me a new and happy man.

The text of the *Meistersinger* was read by Wagner at a social evening which had been arranged by his friend Standhartner in an effort to overcome some of the hostility toward Wagner existing in Vienna. Among others, Standhartner had invited the one-time protagonist but the now venomous opponent—Eduard Hanslick. It was soon apparent that Hanslick disliked *Die*

*Meistersinger*. As the reading progressed, he grew more and more fidgety; when it was over, he rose and left abruptly. The banquet of love had merely intensified his hatred. Thereafter he was irreconcilable. For the character of Beckmesser, that pedantic and malicious enemy of genius, poetry and originality, Hanslick had identified with himself.

Wagner had met envy and hatred and stupidity before. This hour might seem dark—but it was no darker than many another he had already experienced. *Tristan* had been abandoned in Vienna; but *Tristan* was there, greater than all the Hanslicks. And as he had done so often before when beset by almost unconquerable trouble, he set to work. Let the Hanslicks and Beckmessers gabble! This poem which he had completed and the music of which he was now composing would be his answer to them! He would pit Hans Sachs and Walter von Stolzing against all the Beckmessers in the world! Poetry and poetic inspiration against Philistinism, pedantry and blindness. He was Walter von Stolzing, and poets like Hans Sachs would surely understand him.

The burden of distress and disappointment was suddenly lifted from him. Harassed as he was by debt and the insistent demands of creditors, weary as he was of wandering, he yet knew that his stay in Vienna could not be long. But there was time for at least the first act of the *Meistersinger*. Already the wonderful pageantry of Renaissance Nuremberg took musical shape. Already he could hear the mighty tread of the Mastersingers. Already the challenge of Walter's prize-song. Already the scorpion-whip notes with which to smite all the Beckmessers, wherever they might be!

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No untoward storm of ill will or partisanship disturbed the life of Johann Strauss. At the height of his powers now, he was the darling of all—upper, lower and middle classes—the musician and the layman alike. Liszt, Wagner, Brahms admired him. Even the great conductor, Hans von Bülow—rarely given to adulation—spoke of Strauss' genius as "great in the small *genre* as Wagner's [is] in the sublime."

Enmity and indifference—which had barred the way of greater men—scarcely touched him. Strauss wrote for all, and was understood by all.

The unrest which had characterized the father stirred also within the son. When the outside world called, he packed his bags and went. First came the enchantment of far-off St. Petersburg. In the immense Vauxhall Palace of Pavlovsk he directed his musicians and ravished his audiences; in turn he was ravished by the glamour of the white nights, and the soft, rich beauty of blazing eyes. One such pair held him spellbound. She was a member of a rich and powerful family. And even if she had not already been betrothed, her parents would not readily have consented to a union with a musician, no matter how romantic the waltzes he wrote. Yet to Strauss she was irresistible. "I have come to believe more and more firmly that you are being destined by God to be my own. The thought of living without you no longer exists for me."

The distance between St. Petersburg and Vienna is great. Once Strauss had returned to his own city, the

great passion he had experienced under the white Russian skies became more and more a beautiful memory, worth preserving if not dying for. The Viennese sky is not white, but Viennese women are beautiful. Even if they were less beautiful than Olga, they were, at the moment at any rate, more tangible.

The woman who was to be his "destiny" was Henrietta Treffz. "Jetty," as he always affectionately called her, was ten years older than Strauss. She was the mistress of Baron Moritz Todesco, a rich Viennese Jew, and the mother of his children. At one time she had been one of Vienna's great sopranos, and had vied with Jenny Lind in popularity. Berlioz had written a rhapsodic account of her singing.

The daughter of a Viennese silversmith, she retained throughout her life a good common sense and self-respect which not even her equivocal status could mar. She was a woman of great experience and exquisite taste. At home in humble as well as genteel society, she bore herself with dignity. And when she fell in love with Strauss she opened her heart to the Baron. Baron Todesco, no whit less generous and open than she, gave her her freedom and a handsome gift of money.

They were married at St. Stephen's Cathedral on August 27, 1862.

To Johann Strauss she meant fulfillment. An artist herself, she understood his art. Gifted with fine intuition, she was his companion in every way. She understood the duties of the household and the tasks of a housewife.

Under her influence he grew more mature, deeper. The early unrest gave way to a profound but more fertile quietness. When they finally settled in a luxurious villa in Hietzing, almost adjoining the imperial palace

of Schönbrunn, he felt—justly—that he had become one of the world's elect. Here, amid the light of innumerable candles, he would work deep into the night. When the kind genius of creation was upon him (it hovered near him more frequently these days than ever before!), he would sketch the first of his great new waltzes.

New waltzes, indeed, for they were symphonies meant for dancing. New in that their melodies were richer, deeper, more strongly felt; their harmonies fuller. New in their magic instrumentation. New in that—more than all the others that had preceded them—they embodied Strauss' love for Vienna, and his gratitude for all that the city had given him: Jetty, music, adulation and, not least of all, this wonderful house near Schönbrunn.

New waltzes—like the *Beautiful Blue Danube*. . . .

The Danube is beautiful, but it is not blue. Viennese imagination insists that it is both. Since poets have said so (and their word is unimpeachable), blue and beautiful it shall be!

A pre-March poet, Karl Beck, had written a poem:

*Und ich sah Dich reich an Schmerzen,  
Und ich sah Dich jung und hold . . .  
An der Donau, an der schönen blauen Donau!*

And I saw thee rich in sorrow,  
And I saw thee young and fair . . .  
By the Danube, by the beautiful, blue Danube!

The Danube is green, sometimes gray, sometimes silvery. But Johann Strauss read these lines, and he knew that the Danube was blue. Had not the romantic poets longed for the unattainable *blue* flower? The blue Danube is the romantic blue flower of Viennese longing.

And Strauss lulled his hearers on the waves of his music, the opening notes—on a D-major triad—already suggesting the movement of the water. . . .

Lost the provinces of Venetia and Lombardy! Lost the leadership of the German peoples in Europe! But the Danube is beautiful and blue!

The easy movement of the waves suddenly gathers strength and asserts itself more majestically—as if to say: The Danube flows by Vienna, and by Budapest; there the Hungarian crown, here the Austrian.

When, on an unforgettable evening in 1867, Johann Strauss introduced his *Blue Danube Waltz* at the Dianasaal, his audience was excited; many stood on their chairs and demanded its repetition again and again. Shortly afterwards Strauss brought the waltz to Paris for the Exposition, where it captivated the city. From there it traveled to London. Then it went around the world—to become Austria's second national anthem.

This was his symphony. Jetty's hand and heart were in this. And in the succeeding waltzes as well—all of them. They were odes to her, and to Vienna. *Wine, Woman and Song*, *Artist's Life*, *Vienna Blood*, *A Thousand and One Nights*, and more wonderful still, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*.

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Fasching! Carnival time in Vienna. 1864.

A thin, lanky Frenchman with a mighty Adam's apple, quick blue eyes gleaming behind pince-nez, a wit that was as sharp as a dagger's point, and a talent for music. None other than Jacques Offenbach.

But for an accident of birth, he might have been Viennese. The Viennese took to him as to a native son, rushed to see him and hear his operettas. No less than three of his

works were playing at the same time in three different theaters. Offenbach liked Vienna; he loved adulation; he was enchanted with the way the Viennese acclaimed his *Orpheus in der Unterwelt*, and accepted the "cancan" to which he had introduced them. He would write for them—gladly. When the Press Club Concordia requested a waltz, he gave them one—*Abendblätter*. Johann Strauss, too, was asked. He wrote *Morgenblätter*. Both waltzes were performed at a ball given by the Concordia, and for weeks it was a question in Vienna as to which was the greater waltz.

The thin, sardonic Frenchman with the salty wit found entry into the Court Opera, where one year before *Tristan und Isolde* had been rejected. But the *Rheinnixen* was no great success. Written in the "grand manner," instead of with his customary lightness, it contained pixies, soldiers, water sprites, maidens. The music was as unconvincing as the libretto. It was too much—even for the Viennese.

They sat sipping wine at the Goldenes Lamm—the two greatest composers of light music, Jacques Offenbach and Johann Strauss. They exchanged polite compliments. Then Offenbach asked: Why did not Strauss turn his genius to something more ambitious than waltzes? Why not, in short, an operetta? A Viennese operetta, in the style of the Offenbach *opéra bouffe*?

What had been intended as a casual question soon began to haunt Strauss. He spoke to Jetty about it, and she repeated Offenbach's query: Why not an operetta? Strauss could not help feeling that he had already composed his most beautiful waltzes. Now he needed greater scope for his gifts. And—who knew?—perhaps new triumphs were awaiting him.

## 9

At first reluctantly, then under the pressure of Jetty's words, Strauss went to work on his first operetta. What wonderful opportunity there was for him to transplant the brilliant irony and wit of the French prototype and feed it on Viennese life, to puncture sham and castigate folly! But no! That would have, perhaps, ruffled the calm surface of Viennese existence, touched, perhaps, an inner spring. Strauss was Vienna's idol not because he made it think, but because he made it feel. And that was the secret, he knew, which opened the heart of the city to him. For he was the composer of a life without problems.

And so he began his dramatic career—as was to be expected—with *éclat*. *Indigo, or the Forty Thieves* his first operetta was called. Who cared or knew what the title meant or what the text contained—so long as there were polkas, quadrilles and waltzes? To listen to these was once more to drink the good *heuriger* in one of the Grinzing *Weinstuben*—a *heuriger* that was cool and heady and brought the tears to one's eyes.

"*Ja, so singt man, ja so singt man in der Stadt wo ich geboren bin!*"—"Yes, so one sings, so one sings, in the city of my birth!" "*Dort an der blauen Donau möchte ich gehen.*"—"There by the blue Danube, there I'd like to go!" These were words the audiences understood, words about a city filled with song, hard by the beautiful blue Danube.

"Schani"—as Johann Strauss was often called—kept his ear close to the heart of Vienna. Since its heartbeat had quickened to his first operetta, he decided that he would write more.

And in 1873 he composed *Die Fledermaus*.

The years following Königgrätz had been years of financial speculation such as Austria had scarcely seen before. An unprecedented "boom" swept over the country. Rapid industrialization required capital; and investment begot hopes of quick and undreamed-of profits, sometimes built upon fabulous and nonexistent enterprises.

On May 1, 1873, Emperor Francis Joseph officially opened the World Exposition in Vienna. This was to be an act of rededication—a proclamation to the world of the restored strength and prestige of the Habsburgs. The exposition was magnificent. It was, in a measure, the living symbol of a returning prosperity. Unfortunately, like so many Austrian holidays, it was fated to be spoiled.

Eight days later the crash came. "Blue Friday" it was called. The collapse was so sudden and complete that every European capital shook with the impact. Panic gave way to frenzy and imprecation. Speculators and bankers were scarcely secure with their lives and possessions. Before long, malice and profit sought out—as they have since—a ready scapegoat, and directed the pent-up anger of the multitude against the Jew. The composer Fahrbach wrote a *Crash-Polka*; and the melody of the *Blue Danube* evoked for a time the bitter memory of suicides.

No shadow of this disaster fell across the pages of Strauss's music. While the cries of disenchantment and anger filled the streets, he was quietly composing *Die Fledermaus*—to soothe the harassed nerves of the panic-stricken Viennese. For the impoverished, who had lost their goods and houses, he was preparing a feast crowned with champagne!

The French librettists, Meilhac and Halévy, had written a comedy, *Reveillon*, which the impresario, Maximilian Steiner, had turned over to the Viennese authors, Genée and Haffner, for revision. Johann Strauss was to set it to music.

*Die Fledermaus*—as the comedy was finally called—was a piece of dramatic intrigue, not without cleverness or bright humor, in which the chief character, instead of reporting to prison to fill a short term for a minor offense, proceeds to a masquerade given at the palace of Prince Orloff; while his wife's former admirer, chancing to visit her that night, is jailed when he is mistaken for her husband. In costume the wife, too, proceeds to the ball, where she carries on intrigue with her own husband.

Such is the theme. The text is gay, abandoned, risqué; the music is ironic, piquant, engaging. The masquerade at Orloff's gave Strauss the long-awaited opportunity: the celebrated waltz with which the scene culminates, with its opening sharp eighth-notes, still makes the blood tingle.

*Die Majestät wird anerkennt  
Es lebe, Champagner der Erstel*

A toast to His Majesty,  
Long live Champagne the First!

*Die Fledermaus* was, indeed, a paean to the prince of wines, and like the prince of wines, was frothy, bubbling and intoxicating.

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For a time, it seemed, there would be no end of wine. Johann Strauss became a grand seigneur, bought a villa

at Ischl, a palace in the Igelgasse in Vienna, and an estate in Leobersdorf. In 1874 a Strauss jubilee celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the first Strauss band.

Suddenly the captivating waltz theme—which was his life—was broken. In 1878, Jetty died. True, he was no longer in love with her. But he was fifty-three, and the impact of the loss—and the greater fear of being alone—unnerved him. He had always been a favorite of women, but like many a man spoiled by their favors, he did not distinguish between madness and adventure. And when one is fifty-three the price of both is high.

Angelica Dietrich was twenty, and had beautiful long blond hair. She could sing too. Strauss did not think twice. He married her. He who had been enamored of the theater suddenly found himself playing the role of the old husband. The theme of January and May—so entertaining on the boards—proved distressingly bitter drama when acted in his own home. The marriage lasted five years, proceeding for Angelica through all the finer gradations of deceit and adultery; and for Johann through bitterness to a complete revulsion of spirit.

After five years he was free again—and fifty-eight years old. Still mad, still adventurous, he chanced it a third time—and won. Adele Deutsch was a widow, and in order to marry her Johann had to renounce both his faith and his country. He was a Catholic, and could not obtain a divorce in Austria. But he deemed the prize worth while. Adele more than compensated for the five years of horror. Again it seemed that his early years with Jetty had returned. Once more he felt the renewal of energy. And as his life with Jetty made possible the wonderful waltzes and *Die Fledermaus*, so the happiness of

these years with Adele gave him new courage to compose *Der Zigeunerbaron*.

On the twenty-fourth of October, 1885, the operetta was produced at the Theater an der Wien, on the eve of Strauss' sixtieth birthday. It was a beautiful birthday gift, for it ran for eighty-five nights.

Two years before that he had been in Budapest with Adele. There Maurus Jokai, the novelist, had suggested the libretto—a theme of which dealt with a dispossessed Hungarian grandee in love with a gypsy. The wild romance of the *puszta* and of the wandering tribes had always attracted the Viennese. In the Hungarians they found that wildness of spirit, that impetuosity and pride which their own softer nature lacked.

In *Der Zigeunerbaron*, Strauss brought them the union of diverse characters. For the operetta constituted the marriage of the czardas and the waltz, the Hungarian spirit and the Austrian. Military splendor and (at least in the opera) military triumph were crowned by love. Here were all the elements to warm the Austrian heart, which could roam at will with gypsy tribes, and win imaginary battles when Königgrätz and the bank crashes made life at home fretful.

And when they heard the celebrated *Schatzwalzer*, the Viennese knew that all was well again. Schani was still at his best!

“*Der Weaner geht net unter.*”

VIENNA did not treat Johannes Brahms with the unmitigated hatred which it directed toward so many other

great composers. Eduard Hanslick, the most powerful and vitriolic critic, was on his side, fighting his battles. But, until 1871, Brahms was no nearer attaining a permanent place than Wagner had been. He was approaching forty. His works were known everywhere in Europe. He had many powerful and keen-sighted friends, whose admiration for him was unbounded and who, wherever they might be, exerted themselves in proclaiming the Brahms gospel: Clara Schumann, Hermann Levi, the conductor, and Joseph Joachim. Yet in his own eyes he was still a wanderer, drifting from place to place, now conducting an orchestra, now performing his own works on the piano.

He felt that he was wasting himself, that his genius was being injured by the exertions for which, he confessed, he was unfitted. He had large plans for which he required peace, leisure and an assured income. He had already given an earnest of what he might do when, in 1867, he had brought back to Vienna the *German Requiem*, and had allowed Herbeck to perform a portion of it with the Singverein. Unprepared for this work, both chorus and orchestra almost ruined it; and an angry clique—always there when new works were performed—had not failed to take advantage of the occasion. Hanslick might chide the Viennese public, himself not least guilty of artistic obtuseness and charlatanry. Joachim, then in Vienna, might be awed by a work the grandeur of which *he* could assay despite the inadequate performance. But so far as the Viennese public was concerned, the work had failed. That Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, or even Bach's B-minor Mass, might not have fared better was scant solace to Brahms.

Yet he felt strong—stronger than his enemies. The clouds which hung over him while he was composing the *Requiem* (written to commemorate his own mother and Robert Schumann) were soon lifted. In the cathedral at Bremen, where the work was played in its entirety for the first time, it aroused admiration and enthusiasm.

Well, he was almost forty now. He felt that a new creative force was stirring within him—the beginning, it seemed, of a greater and deeper period. Although he had written chamber music before, he had as yet composed no string quartets. And strong and irresistible was the desire to complete a symphony. The feeling that Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven had begun their careers with string quartets and symphonies, while he was still waiting, must have been present with him at this time. With Mozart's quartets in mind, he wrote: "We, too, will try very hard and write one or two passable ones." If only he could find peace!

In 1871 Johann Herbeck became director of the Court Opera and resigned his post as conductor of the Singverein. Brahms awaited the appointment, but did not bestir himself. He was proud, and would compel the Viennese to come to him. However, it was Anton Rubinstein who received the appointment, only to resign it at the end of the year. This time Brahms was invited. In the fall of 1872 he accepted, and immediately thereafter entered upon his duties.

It was doubtful that the quiet for which he was longing, and without which he felt he could no longer exist, would be provided amidst those arduous tasks of rehearsal, friction and personal antagonism with which his artistic life was now to abound. Yet, though he saw the storms

ahead of him, he no doubt felt that here was the moment in which he could test his strength. All that had gone before was merely a skirmish. As director of the *Gesellschaft* he would now be in a position to impose his will on Vienna, and prove how far superior he was to Herbeck and Rubinstein.

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He had not yet grown that patriarchal beard for which he later became famous; that was to come soon, when he had—so to speak—settled down. Even without the precious growth, he struck his contemporaries as a strong, vivid personality. He was short and squat; his lower lip protruded somewhat markedly. But his broad chest and his powerful shoulders—above all, the strong head, with its rich, sandy hair—spoke of a rugged earthy force.

He settled in the *Karlsgasse* 4, on the third floor, at first taking two, later three, small rooms, in which his bulk must have felt somewhat *unbehaglich*. In these quarters he lived until his death, twenty-five years later. From the windows of these narrow rooms he could look down upon a changing city—its growth almost paralleling his own. From these windows he looked out upon the *Karlskirche* and its baroque columns and cupola, and he could still see the little tributary of the Danube, the *Wien*, flowing through the city.

He was satisfied with these quarters. Visitors may have wondered at the arrangement which led them through a kitchen and bedroom into Brahms's workroom, where stood the piano which Schumann had used, and where books and papers were strewn about in bachelor disorder. The decorations were commonplace—a copy of the *Sistine Madonna*, of *Mona Lisa*, a medallion of

Robert and Clara Schumann. But for Brahms there was restfulness in the commonplace, and he settled down as if after a long and tiring walk, to enjoy this solid and unpretentious comfort.

Here small and great personages came to visit him, finding the untidy little man in his disordered lodging, sometimes at work, sometimes at the piano, often absorbed in books, of which he had many.

He would rise early in the morning, brew his own coffee, work for a few hours. Then he would proceed to inspect the city. Sometimes he would walk in the Prater, or through one of the other parks; sometimes, at a straggler's gait, through the city streets. At noon, he would stop at the *Schöne Laterne*, or at the *Roter Igel*. In later years, with the growth of the beard, came also a patriarchal benignity, which endeared him to innumerable children.

He could by turns be charming and unpleasant, nor could his moods always be predicted. His words, uttered in falsetto, were frequently barbed. Toward his fellow musicians he was not always gracious or kind. Frequently envy of other men's fortunes stung him, and he would be unsparing and unjust. On the other hand, few were kinder and more devoted to friends, and his deeds frequently compensated for his gruff words.

He was created for the comforts of domestic life. But he had always run away from marriage. Not that he was timid with women. On the contrary, he was attracted by them; and they in turn, were attracted by him. He would pay them court, flirt, make lovely songs for them—but always, when it came to declaring himself, he fled. So it had been with Clara Schumann; and so with Clara Schumann's daughter, with Agathe Siebold, and again

with Elizabeth Stockhausen. Whatever it was that inhibited him—and biographers have differed in their views—whether impotence, or a psychic fear of a permanent attachment, or (as the most generous would have it) devotion to his art, *das ewig Weibliche* is present only in the periphery of Brahms's experience, and in his songs—almost as a kind of tender sublimation.

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## I I

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UNDERNEATH his very windows, the city—which for more than a hundred years had remained unchanged—was growing and changing. Beyond the city the suburbs had spread out, for the population of Vienna had risen from four to almost eight hundred thousand. But stubbornly, as if to assert its historic priority and greater nobility, and as if to ward off all encroachment, the city held on to its bastions and walls.

But attachment to the past—beautiful and useful as it was—gave way to necessity. The artificial boundary between the inner and the outer city, with its wasteland of dismal little streets and charming, impenetrably dark houses, yielded to the present. In 1857 the Emperor officially decreed the demolition of the walls.

Sentiment and tradition fought for the old. They feared the vaster city, a huge and ungainly monster that would arise when the bounds were removed. They loved the old, dark, crooked, little streets and ancient houses. But they struggled in vain. The present triumphed.

The walls came down. In their place came the most magnificent of modern streets—the Ringstrasse. The new city was born.

But the past reasserted itself in the end. For the new street which circled the inner city resurrected the past. Its buildings were Gothic, baroque, Renaissance, classic, Empire. They spoke of yesterday—of the noble, solid, romantic past.

1865—1885.

At the northern end of the city, at the Schottentor (not far from where the boy Mozart had lived) now stood the neo-Gothic Votivkirche, with its twin spires, a reminder of Paris cathedrals. Beyond this (we are now following the Ringstrasse) was the City Hall, a Belgian Gothic. Then Greece, in the Parthenon-like House of Parliament; and the Renaissance in the structures of the University and the new Burgtheater. All within a stone's throw of Beethoven's house on the Mölkerbastei.

In impressive succession came the other gems—the new wing of the palace, flanked by the twin museums, of Art and of Natural History, all set within the magnificent spaciousness of squares, with their statuary. Here, the throned figure of Maria Theresa; there the equestrian statue of Prince Eugene. Then the Academy of Fine Arts, and—at the junction of the Ring and Kärntnerstrasse—the romantic baroque of the Court Opera.

Of all the gems that studded the imperial diadem, the Viennese pointed with greatest pride to two: the Burgtheater and the Court Opera.

And thus the Ring continued till it came back to the canal of the Danube—the bank of which was also new, now rechristened the Franz-Josefs-Kai.

The old circle of walls was gone. The newer girdle of magnificence called the Ringstrasse, with its lovely parks, was here. But the center was in essence unchanged—

St. Stephen's and, more important than ever, the imperial palace.

So beautifully planned, so gracious, so very proud—the new Vienna, outwardly at least, seemed to belie the rumors of decay within the House of Habsburg.

## I 2

EVEN before the three years with the Singverein had expired, Brahms knew that he would have to go. He had labored hard, had spared neither himself nor his musicians; and the programs he had conducted had made no compromise with popular taste. A worshiper of Bach, he brought to his audience that master's undiscovered treasures, as well as the music of Schubert, Mozart and Beethoven. But Brahms was not the most pliable of men. Petty rivalry and envy sought out for blame now his programs, now the performance, now the fact that the conductor devoted so very much time to composing. When Herbeck—another victim of intrigue—lost his post at the Opera, Brahms took the occasion to resign, to enable Herbeck to recover his former position.

At a farewell dinner to Brahms, his friend, Theodore Billroth, surgeon and musician extraordinary, expressed his bitterness at the indifference of the Viennese: "Other and healthier times will come—may they not be too far away! . . . But now, let us clink glasses and shout: 'Long live our Brahms!'"

He had hoped to purge Viennese taste of its love for trumpery and dross, and again he had been defeated. But now he would have to resign himself. They had not broken his strength. Of that he was sure. That strength,

he knew, they would have to recognize, even if it took years. It was here, already visible, in the quartets—and, above all, in the projected symphony.

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In 1862, Brahms had played the first movement of a symphony for Clara Schumann. She was startled and perplexed by it—finding it very daring and too strong, but—as she added in a letter to Joachim—“full of mastery of themes, as is fairly common with him now, and full of movement like a torrent.” More than ten years later he had taken up this work. By 1876 he completed it.

To Herbeck, who had inquired about the symphony, he wrote: “I need scarcely tell you that the symphony is long, and not very pleasing.”

But this piece of self-derogation must not deceive. He knew that the work, the themes of which had startled Clara Schumann, was a masterpiece. The very key in which it was written—C-minor, the key of Beethoven’s Fifth—was a challenge which, one might add, the threatening notes of the Introduction only confirmed. It was *his* first symphony, completed when he was forty-three years old! At one stroke to vie with Mozart’s G-minor and Beethoven’s Fifth. If Clara had thought the themes she heard daring, what would she now say of the changes in which the soaring violins ascend against the irrepressible pounding of the kettledrums?

On the seventeenth of December, 1876, Herbeck conducted Brahms’s First Symphony, six weeks after it had been given its successful world première at Karlsruhe. Billroth, who had already studied the symphony in score, was beside himself. The whole work reminded him, he said, of Beethoven’s Ninth. The last movement

was the "pearl" in the realm of art, and its principal theme a "hymn of dedication."

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### 13

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WHILE between Brahms and Wagner there was neither undue sympathy nor enmity, each recognizing his own peculiar mission, the partisans and cliques which attached themselves to them were more articulate and vicious. With uncritical exclusiveness, they enrolled under one banner or the other, and proceeded to actual warfare.

The bitterness of the Wagner-Brahms controversy in Vienna was aggravated by the arrival of a third person. In a sense he was an innocent combatant drawn into the conflict by his own mental simplicity, no less than by his fervent partisans and bitter enemies. He was temperamentally unfitted for warfare of this kind. For he had neither the sharp, resilient genius of Wagner nor the sturdy belligerence of Brahms. He was soft and yielding.

His name was Anton Bruckner, and he had come to settle permanently in Vienna in 1868, after years of almost forlorn hope. Son of a schoolmaster in Ansfelden, Upper Austria, and for a time a needy schoolmaster himself, he may, in Goethe's words, be said always to have eaten his bread with tears. He had early shown an extraordinary musical talent; but living in miserable provincial towns where bureaucracy and authoritarian dullness ruled, he found it hard to obtain a hearing.

From the drudgery of a schoolmaster's life he found release in the study of music, and when he had successfully passed his professional examination, he was

appointed to Linz. He was thirty-two years old, an accomplished organist and already a composer of masses. In Linz he grew. His virtuosity at the organ was already arousing comment; even a Viennese journal made mention of it. In his own quiet way he knew what he wanted. He would go to Vienna and study with the illustrious Sechter. He went there for the first time in 1853, and—though his home was in Linz—he returned there frequently during the years that followed. He underwent in Vienna a grueling preliminary examination at the hands of Sechter, Hellmesberger, Dessoff and Herbeck. When he had finished, Herbeck exclaimed in astonishment: “*He should be examining us! If only I knew one-tenth part of what he knows, I’d be a happy man.*”

Thereafter Herbeck proved his most devoted friend and protagonist.

One other experience in Vienna marked the turning point in Bruckner’s life. He was present at a concert in which Wagner participated, and for the first time heard Wagner’s works. Two years later, in Linz, his friend and teacher, Otto Kitzler, handed him the score of *Tannhäuser*. That sense of mystical exaltation—which for mystics signifies the ultimate perception of truth—must have come over him at the time. When not long thereafter he heard Kitzler conduct *Tannhäuser* in Linz, Bruckner was sure that his fate was sealed. Wagner took his place with his other two masters—Bach and Beethoven—as the “masters of all masters.” He knew then that until that moment he had been groping in darkness. The climax of illumination came in 1865 when Bruckner, then almost forty, went to Munich and for the first time heard *Tristan und Isolde*. For hours he stood gazing at Wagner, not daring to approach him.

Already a sickly humility—an almost pathological self-abasement—had become a prominent trait of his character. He had brought with him a draft of his first symphony, to show the master, but diffidence and fear overcame him and he weakened. Hans von Bülow saw the manuscript. "*Welche Herrlichkeit!*"—"What magnificence!"—he exclaimed. Wagner himself was not unimpressed by Bruckner's talent—or was it his hero worship?—and later sent him the final chorus of *Die Meistersinger* for performance in Linz.

Bruckner longed to establish himself in Vienna. His teacher, Sechter, was dead, but Herbeck was straining every effort in his behalf. In July, 1868, he was appointed professor of counterpoint and organ at the Conservatory of Vienna.

"*Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille.*" His talent had developed quietly, and few persons in Vienna knew the timid schoolmaster with the erratic, humble mien who had now arrived with a trunkful of manuscripts.

His appearance was not impressive. Later adulatory biographers saw in his bearing and head something "Caesarean." The head was large and ugly; the nose, aquiline; the jowls, heavy. Altogether there was something pathetic and revolting about him. The eyes were those of a mystic—or a madman. Dostoyevsky might have recognized him perhaps as a weak prototype of Prince Myshkin or Alyosha without their charm or grandeur, but with their "simplicity," singleness and childlikeness.

The year before his arrival he had suffered an acute nervous collapse, from which he had not even now recovered. There can be little doubt that the early days of hardship had seriously injured him.

He was a man of indubitable talent, and an organist with few equals. With quiet intensity, which in itself was magnificent, he continued work at his symphonies and masses, often hurt by public indifference, but undeterred.

In 1869 Herbeck said to him, after a rehearsal of the F-minor Mass in the Augustinerkirche: "You know that Wagner made a mistake with his *Tristan*, and I with my B-major symphony (*sic!*). Can't you agree that you may have made a mistake with this Mass? The D-major Mass I like, but this Mass I cannot produce. It is unsingable." And Bruckner replied: "Yes, one can make mistakes. But I know for a certainty that this Mass is as good as the one in D."

Three years later, in June, 1872, when the Mass in F-minor was performed, Herbeck exclaimed: "Bruckner, I know only this Mass, and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis!*"

Simplicity? Cunning? Genius? Who can tell how these elements were mixed in Bruckner? But most striking of all was this gift of quiet assurance. He was a devout Catholic, and regarded himself as a servant of the Lord, all his music as offerings at the altar. Some years later he said to a friend: "When God calls me to Him and asks me: 'Where is the talent which I have given you?' Then I shall hold out the rolled-up manuscript of my *Te Deum*, and I know He will be a compassionate judge."

With that quiet assurance went a passion for the grandiose which could be satisfied only through the composition of vast masses and immense symphonies. The first years in Vienna were years of profound stress—the *via crucis*, as one biographer has termed the period. Yet it is at this time that he laid plans for the Second Symphony. When, in 1872, this work was completed

and offered to the Philharmonic, Dessoff rejected it as unplayable. Poor Bruckner provided the 405 gulden which the orchestra demanded for its performance. The players were inimical to him and contemptuous of the symphony which he was now compelled to conduct himself.

Among the violinists was Artur Nikisch, who later recorded the scene.

I can hear even now Bruckner, as he approached the conductor's stand saying: "Well, then, gentlemen, we can rehearse as long as we want to: I have someone who's paying for this." The symphony at once awakened in me, as I played it, that enthusiasm which even now, after forty-six years, I still experience toward it and its sister-symphonies.

The almost heroic persistence of the composer triumphed. The work was performed publicly and received its measure of praise and blame. Hanslick accused it of "insatiable rhetoric." Ludwig Speidel said: "It is no ordinary mortal who is speaking through this music."

Already he was at work on his next symphony. In September he arrived with it in Bayreuth. Trembling with excitement, he made his way to Villa Wahnfried with the hope that Wagner would accept the dedication of this work. "At first," Bruckner relates, "he said nothing. Then he fell on my neck and kissed me many times. And I burst into tears."

In Vienna there were evil tongues that whispered of Brahms's enmity and malice, and goaded Bruckner to spiteful words of his own. Brahms was at the height of his mastery, director of the Singverein, proud with the sense of his strength, sometimes too sharply contemptuous of others; Bruckner was equally certain of himself, and revolted by the earthiness of Brahms's creations, felt sure that his own were the works of a deeper spirit.

"Gigantic snake symphonies," Brahms was reported to have called Bruckner's works. "Impostures." Perhaps this judgment is too harsh, for it was aimed at a weaker man who did not have the powerful aid of journalists. Simpler and more generous (one must confess) are Bruckner's words: "He is Brahms; I am Bruckner. I like my works better. He who wants to be soothed by music will become attached to Brahms; but he who wants to be carried away by music will find little satisfaction in his work."

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#### 14

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IN 1875, Wagner came back to Vienna to superintend the production of *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* at the Court Opera. Among those who waited at the railroad station to welcome him was Anton Bruckner. When Wagner saw his excited admirer, he embraced him and exclaimed: "Your symphony *must* be produced." And turning to the others he added: "There stands Bruckner. He is *my* man."

Matters were not going well with Bruckner. It was simple for Wagner to say, "Your symphony *must* be produced." The Third Symphony was not produced. It was enough that Wagner's enemies knew of Bruckner's allegiance to the great composer to set them on his trail. Hanslick pursued him with malicious scorn in the pages of the *Neue Freie Presse*, and for a time even stood in the way of his appointment to a University post. Other critics found him a ready subject on whom to whet their none-too-keen sarcasm: After a performance of his second symphony in February, 1866, one of these—

Gehring—called him a “fool and a half.” A high official of the Conservatory told him: “You ought to throw your symphonies into the refuse basket.”

Hatred and contempt surrounded him. He strove courageously to dispel them, as well as the bitterness that was settling on his own spirit. The Philharmonic Society rejected one work after another, until in despair—if not in humiliation—he vowed never to send in another score. But he never lost faith in himself or his gifts. In 1877, a year of most dreadful defeat, he worked intensely on a new symphony—the Fifth—which was to be his “contrapuntal masterpiece,” but which he was never destined to hear in his own lifetime. Johann Herbeck, his most generous friend, died in the same year; and Bruckner felt more than ever isolated.

On December 16, 1877, he directed a performance of the Third Symphony—the “*Wagner*” *Symphony*. The members of the orchestra—Joseph Hellmesberger among them—laughed at the conductor and at his bulky score. The audience proved no more gracious. At the end only a handful of listeners remained, a few of whom tried desperately to console him. Among them was a young student of the Vienna Conservatory, who was profoundly moved by the symphony and wanted to express his admiration—Gustav Mahler. But Bruckner brushed them all aside. “*Lasst mi aus, die Leut woll’n nix von mir wissen.*”—“Let me go. These people don’t want to know anything of me.” To Hanslick, it seemed as if in this symphony “Beethoven’s Ninth had made friends with Wagner’s Valkyries, and had fallen under the hoofs of their horses.”

His gaze became more and more abstracted, and the pathetic figure more bent and servile. Only God,

Wagner and his music kept him alive. He went to Bayreuth in 1882 to witness *Parsifal*. For hours he stood outside of Villa Wahnfried looking at the windows. And when, for the last time, he gazed upon the man who had changed his whole life, and to whose music he had responded with the complete submission of a disciple, he fell on his knees. "Oh, master, I adore you!"

Before this, Bruckner had already begun the mightiest of his symphonies—the Seventh. The numbers and dimensions of his works mounted in unparalleled assurance, for he felt that only grandeur could express the great emotions which overpowered him.

He was grateful for favors small and large—and sometimes uttered his thankfulness with almost maudlin childishness. Hans Richter, who directed the fourth of his symphonies in 1881, recounts how after one of the rehearsals, Bruckner pressed something into his hand—a Maria Theresa thaler.

This *thaler* is the memento of a day on which I wept. For the first time I was rehearsing a symphony of Anton Bruckner. When the symphony was over, Bruckner came over to me. He shone with excitement and happiness. I felt that he was pressing something into my hand. "Take it," he said, "and drink a pitcher of beer to my health." It was this performance of the symphony which brought him his first unqualified success.

## 15

"BRUCKNER? Bruckner? Who is he? Where does he live? What can he do? Such questions can be heard in Vienna, and from the lips of persons who attend the regular subscription concerts of the Philharmonic and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde."

A new disciple was sounding a note of protest—Hugo Wolf, in the *Wiener Salonblatt* of December, 1884. One by one converts gathered around Bruckner; some drawn to him by genuine admiration of his genius, others merely intent on using him for their own reactionary purposes, and proclaiming him the “seraphic” protagonist of a newer Christian art. Politics and religion played no small part in his gradual ascent to fame.

His Seventh Symphony soon became associated with the names of the most brilliant conductors of the time—Artur Nikisch, Hermann Levi, Felix Mottl and Karl Muck. Finally, Hans Richter played it with the Philharmonic Orchestra in Bruckner’s own city, Vienna. This was Bruckner’s hour of triumph. His enemies grumbled. Max Kalbeck—Brahms’s high priest—cried: “It comes from the Nibelungen, and goes straight to the devil!” Hanslick found the music “corrupting.” But the applause drowned out the hisses. The imperial family, which had done nothing to honor Schubert or Brahms or Wagner, graciously bestowed upon Bruckner the Order of Francis Joseph. An audience with the Emperor crowned his life’s work.

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He always thought of himself as Beethoven’s successor, of Beethoven’s Nine Symphonies not as deterrents but as so many challenges. Never too critical of his own work, in fact always regarding his own creation as a mystical outpouring to be accepted with simplicity and humility (but not to be questioned), he yet had one quality which clashed with the more naïve peasant elements in him: a passion for grandeur. He rarely thought in small forms.

With justice, he has been called the creator of the "baroque" in music. He bore the relation to Beethoven and Bach that the Carracci and Borromini bore to Michelangelo and Leonardo. And as these strove to outdo in grandeur the works of their predecessors and, instead, succeeded in multiplying detail, complicating ornament, substituting the operatic for the emotional, dazzling and confusing the eye, so Bruckner, too, in that insatiable passion for vastness, was led frequently to substitute declamation for eloquence, expanse for grandeur, detail for singleness of design. Where inspiration did not suffice, there he allowed rhetoric to intrude. The example of Wagner—in whose works scope and inspiration were indissolubly wedded—dazzled him. Vienna is the city of baroque, and the great works of Fischer von Erlach—the Karlskirche and the Column am Graben with their dizzying ornaments—these are true Bruckner symphonies.

But when his spirit soared—in magnificent, if not always sustained, flights—he revealed something of Beethoven's greatness. Thus, in certain passages of the Seventh Symphony—in the celebrated slow movement (later interpreted as an elegy on Wagner's death), his speech is stripped of pretentiousness and pomp, and he feels simply and deeply. Later hero worship, already born in the year of the Seventh, sought to sanctify every note of this, and other symphonies, and save them from sacrilegious doubt. But Bruckner's symphonies were like himself: the peasant and mystic was sturdy, direct, deeply emotional; the man of the city was spurious, self-conscious, rhetorical and nervous. And these two souls within him dwelt side by side to the last.

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FROM the little rooms in the Karlsgasse 4, Johannes Brahms watched the world outside changing and growing like his own fame. He seemed always on the move now, and far from displeasing him, his travels to and fro appeared to be heartening interludes in the arduousness of composition. He was almost forty-five now, a little heavier than formerly, but also keener mentally—and, with the ripening of his fortunes, more genial. In the winter months he lived here in Vienna. The summer months—which were always for him the great months of creation to be looked forward to—he spent in the country, sometimes in Ischl, the country seat of the Emperor, sometimes in the Carinthian lake country, sometimes in Germany.

His creative faculties, always alive, gained greater sharpness when he was away from the distractions of the city. He loved Vienna with a passion second only to that of creation. And in the spring, the beauty of the streets appeared incomparable. "The spring, the Prater and everything else—are glorious!" The innumerable ideas which broke on him as he walked, or sat in the park or in his high rooms, he gathered up and set in order in the quiet of the country. In the peaceful leisure of the Carinthian summers he composed—in 1877 and 1878—the second of his symphonies, his first violin sonata and his violin concerto.

He had still that slightly disparaging way of speaking of his own works, of which—we know—he was an in-

ordinately proud father. When he had completed the Second Symphony, he wrote to Hanslick:

If I should let you hear a symphony this coming winter, it will sound so jolly and pleasant, that you'll believe I had composed it especially for you and your young wife. That's no work of art, you'll say; Brahms is merely canny; the Wörther lake is virginal soil, and melodies are so plentiful, that you have to take care not to crush any underfoot.

The circle of his influential friends had grown, friends who were to be matured by him and were in turn to spread his fame. Not least of these was the conductor, Hans Richter. Son of a Viennese soprano of note who had sung the part of Venus at the first Viennese performance of *Tannhäuser*, Hans Richter was Viennese to the marrow. His unusual precocity was evident even during his Conservatory days. A school friend later recalled his versatility:

Was there no trombonist, Richter laid down his horn, and seized the trombone; next time it would be the oboe, the bassoon or the trumpet. And then he would pop up among the violins. I saw him once manipulating the contrabass, and on the kettledrums he was unsurpassed. When we—the Conservatory orchestra—under Hellmesberger's direction once performed a Mass in the Church of the Invalides, Richter sang. . . . Moreover, I learned to know him on that day as an excellent organist.

Fortune was with him. His musicianship was brought to the attention of Wagner, and the latter invited him to Lucerne where Richter helped with the copying of the score of *Die Meistersinger*. What that year with Wagner must have meant in the young musician's life! When he began his career as conductor in Munich, and later in Pesth, he was already the ardent Wagnerite. It was as an interpreter of Wagner that he was later to take his place among the greatest orchestral leaders.

He seemed created for success. As a result of one appearance in Vienna he was offered, on Dessoff's retirement in 1875, the direction of the Court Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic. In the following year came Bayreuth, and the Wagner festival.

As Liszt had revealed in the piano the eloquence of an orchestra, so Richter succeeded in playing on the orchestra as if it were a single instrument. Patiently, slowly, indefatigably—but also without mercy—he labored to achieve his effects, leaving nothing to chance, not the least phrase or accent. To his men, used to the easygoing methods of Dessoff, he was something of a miracle: his memory was astonishing—he rarely referred to the score; and he could play almost every instrument in the orchestra. And what amazement he must have caused when, rising above cliques and intrigues, he divided his loyalties evenly between Wagner and Brahms!

C. F. Pohl, the biographer of Haydn, was present when Richter rehearsed Brahms's Second Symphony. He wrote:

Thursday was the second rehearsal; yesterday, the "dress" rehearsal. Richter has taken great pains in preparing, and will also conduct today. This is a magnificent work. . . . Every movement, pure gold; and all four together form a necessary whole. . . . It's over! Masterly performance; warmest reception. The third movement—repeated cheering. . . .

Other friends gathered around Brahms. There was Karl Goldmark, who had risen to fame in Vienna twenty years earlier through his chamber works and his *Sakuntala Overture*. Now he was at the height of his career, a European celebrity—the result, in large measure, of the widely publicized première of his opera, *The Queen of Sheba*, at the Vienna Court Opera.

Seen frequently with Goldmark—at the “Brahms table” in the café-houses—was a young Bohemian composer, Antonin Dvořák, whom Brahms had “discovered.” Brahms, who had succeeded in obtaining for Dvořák a government stipend (the first significant compensation for his work), sent him to his own publisher, Simrock, with a cordial letter of introduction. “Dvořák has written in all possible styles—opera, symphonies, quartets, piano pieces,” Brahms wrote. “Decidedly he is a very talented man!” With time Brahms drew closer to the young musician. “I have no children,” he once told Dvořák, “and I have no one to take care of. Regard my possessions as yours.”

A few years after Goldmark and Dvořák had joined Brahms’s circle came Hans von Bülow.

One of the most accomplished pianists of his generation—and one of its greatest orchestral leaders—Hans von Bülow had passed through a most critical personal experience. His wife, Cosima, had left him after she and Wagner had fallen in love. Yet he had remained, despite this injury, the most devoted protagonist of Wagner’s music. He was now conductor of the Duke of Meiningen’s orchestra. A closer acquaintance with Brahms and his compositions brought passionate enthusiasm—and Bülow soon came to regard himself as a Brahms apostle. “I shall insure his posterity for him *now!*” he said. The erratic, high-strung Bülow placed his orchestra at the disposal of the composer. They undertook concert tours together. Frequently Brahms himself appeared as a soloist with the Meiningen Orchestra.

What I think of Brahms, you know [Bülow wrote to his betrothed, Marie Schanzer]. After Bach and Beethoven, the greatest, the loftiest of all composers. His friendship, I hold, after yours, as my most precious good. It

marks an epoch in my life; it represents moral triumph. I believe no musical heart in the world—not even that of his oldest friend, Joachim—feels so profoundly, has plunged so deeply into the depths of his spirit as mine. Ah, his Adagios! Religion!



To have such friends, and such interpreters as Richter, Bülow, Joachim and Clara Schumann, was full reward for a lifetime's labors. And these continued undiminished. In 1881 the second piano concerto in B-flat major; in 1882 a piano trio and a quintet; and in 1883—to celebrate his fiftieth year—his Third Symphony.

Outwardly he might seem calm and undisturbed, but the work of creation was accompanied by inward storms of which few of his friends were aware. In Ischl, for example, he would wander off into the woods, his head full of projects and themes. One day his friend and later his biographer, Kalbeck, surprised him:

Like him, I was a lover of Nature, and one July morning, I wandered out into the open. Suddenly, from the woods, I saw running toward me across the meadow, a man, whom I held to be a peasant. . . . To my joy, I recognized Brahms. But in what a state! And how he looked! Bareheaded and in his sleeves, without waist-coat or collar, he waved his hat in one hand, and with the other he dragged his jacket, which he had taken off, in the grass after him, and ran forward so quickly as if he was hounded by invisible pursuers. . . . Before I had time to recover from my terror, he had passed by me, so close, that we almost touched. . . .

And on another occasion Kalbeck came unperceived upon Brahms when the latter was at his piano. He heard passage after passage, then a strange accompaniment of whining and groans. After a half hour's silent waiting, Kalbeck entered the room.

Brahms appeared somewhat embarrassed. Like a bashful child, he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. He must have wept bitterly, for the bright tears still clung to his beard, and his voice was soft and tremulous.

Wagner died in 1883, and even Vienna mourned him. After *Parsifal* his most ardent enemies suddenly were touched by his "conversion" and the revolutionary thinker and musician was forgiven his sins because he had ended with the discovery of the Holy Grail. With Wagner out of the way, they had gathered around the standard of Bruckner, upon whom they believed the mantle of Elijah had descended, with a double portion of the prophet's inspiration. Little men, they kept the quarrel alive—and envious of Brahms's fortunes, they did their best to injure him.

Brahms had not altered his views of Bruckner's work. But toward Wagner he had warmed considerably. In a conversation with Richard Specht, Brahms expressed himself with finality: "Don't you believe that I am the musician who understands Wagner's works best—certainly better than any one of his so-called adherents, who would gladly poison me? I myself said to Wagner once that I am today the best Wagnerian. Do you believe me to be so circumscribed that I cannot be entranced by the gorgeousness and greatness of the *Meistersinger*? Or so dishonest that I would conceal my belief that a few bars of this opera worth more than all the operas that have been composed since? I an anti-pope? It is really too silly!"

But toward Bruckner he remained uncompromisingly hostile. To his friend, Elizabeth von Herzogenberg, he wrote:

Everything has its limits. Bruckner lies outside of these. Concerning his works, we can say neither this nor that—in fact we can say nothing. No

more than about the person. He is a poor, crazy man, whom the priests of St. Florian have on their conscience. I don't know whether you have any idea of what it is to have spent one's youth with the priests? But I could say more of this, and much more concerning Bruckner. . . .

And to Richard Specht, Brahms once said: "Bruckner's works immortal, or even symphonies? It is enough to make one laugh!"

What Kalbeck had bitterly called the Wagner-Bruckner "*ecclesia militans*" was on hand to do its worst when Hans Richter conducted the Third Symphony of Brahms in December, 1883. The Brucknerites hissed; the Brahmsites applauded. The Brahmsites won.

After the performance the triumphant "Brahmins"—Billroth, Simrock, Dvořák, Hellmesberger, Richter, Hanslick (among others)—celebrated at the home of Arthur Faber. In the heat of the battle at the symphony hall, the Third Symphony had been almost forgotten. It took the quiet aftermath to bring fuller understanding. Clara Schumann called it a "forest idyl." Hanslick dreamed (when he listened to it) of a refreshing storm. Others read into the symphony their own hearts' struggles.

But all were sure that there was no diminution of strength or originality in the new symphony—from the overwhelming chords at the opening, announced by the woodwinds and brass, followed immediately by the restless sweep of the main theme in the violins; down through the breath-taking contrast of the simpler and quieter andante (almost a folk song), ending in a magnificent flight of strings; and the forward sweep of the final two movements, the last of which, again as in the other symphonies, carries warning notes of an anticipated storm.

## 17

THE young critic of the fashionable *Salonblatt*, who had raised his voice in behalf of Bruckner, was causing no end of scandal. In scathing fashion he was attacking now the regimen at the Court Opera, now the Philistine taste of Vienna, now Hans Richter's conservatism, now the gay indifference of Viennese audiences to true greatness, now their favorites Hanslick and Brahms. With vigor he struck out right and left, causing astonishment and dismay—and enmity. Who was this young Prometheus, this self-appointed lightbringer? Few persons knew him.

Hugo Wolf.

Son of a currier, in Styria, he had come to Vienna in 1875—then fifteen years old—to study music at the Conservatory. His father, honest artisan that he was, had sent him to Vienna only half willingly, and as a last resort; for he no longer knew what to do with the wayward boy. Hugo Wolf had been a hopeless student at school in Styria. Time and again he had been expelled. In only one direction had he betrayed interest—in music. His father finally decided to allow him to follow his bent. An aunt, living in Vienna, had offered to board him and keep a watchful eye on him.

Even in Vienna his father's pathetic warnings pursued him.

"Poor Hugo! [he wrote to his sister] Would that he changed his mind betimes and continued his other studies, so that he may not be crushed by harsh disillusionment, when it is too late. Let him read Lortzing's biography. . . . So Germany has in recent times honored and rewarded her artists!"

At the Conservatory, Hugo Wolf found life difficult. Very soon a disagreement with Joseph Hellmesberger brought about his dismissal. His formal schooling was at an end.

The greater and more rigorous schooling which he was now to undergo never really tamed him. A burning fever consumed him. At the Court Opera—high up in its galleries—he witnessed a performance of *Tannhäuser* in 1875. He shouted himself hoarse and wore himself out in applauding the opera: "I find no words for it . . . and will only tell you that I am an idiot. . . . The music of this great master has taken me out of myself." From that moment he—like Bruckner—became a Wagnerite.

Richard Wagner was then in Vienna, living at the Hotel Imperial. The young boy sought him out, and after days of tense waiting and distant admiration was admitted to the master's rooms. Wagner had little time for young composers who came bringing their manuscripts. He treated Hugo Wolf somewhat patronizingly. "My dear boy," Wagner told him, "I cannot give you an opinion of your compositions. I have far too little time. . . . When I was your age and composing music, no one could possibly foretell if I should ever do anything great or important. . . . When you are older, and have composed larger works, and if I chance to return to Vienna, you must show me what you have done. But it is of little use now. It is far too soon to give you any opinion."

The boy, who had thought to gain praise for his song, *Auf dem See*, was disappointed. Yet he never forgot this moment which brought him face to face with the giant who had opened a new world to him.

Some years later, when Wagner died, Wolf was more mature, but no less ardent. When news came to him of Wagner's death, one of his friends wrote:

. . . [Wolf] went to the piano and played the funeral march from *Götterdämmerung*. Then he shut the piano and went—silently as he came. In the evening, he reappeared in a subdued and deeply sorrowful mood. "I have wept like a child," he told me.

To Felix Mottl, Wolf wrote that he had dreamed of Wagner, that they had spoken together again: "How strange! Even today, I can scarcely believe that the man who changed us lumps of clay into human beings is dead. . . ."

\* \* \*

Without home, without funds, Hugo Wolf was dependent on the kindness of friends and relatives in Vienna. They provided him with food and lodging. He accepted these now with reluctance, for he was proud and willful; now with indifference, for his mind was elsewhere. He wanted books, passionately, hungrily. When he lacked money to buy them he hired himself out as a musician in a *Bierstube*. He read incessantly—Grillparzer, Heine, Goethe, Dickens, Thackeray, Hebbel, Mörike. But above all he was drawn to the kindred genius of Heinrich von Kleist. This was the world in which he was at home.

He was small, of mean build, thin and undernourished. His eyes looked out wild and feverish. He seemed always on the brink of hysteria. He was wild and excitable in gesture and expression, his heart always pounding—either in admiration or in hatred. The small body was an inexhaustible storehouse of energy, of fiercely burning

hysterical energy. The poet Kleist had been like that. And Hugo Wolf understood Kleist.

When he read his favorite poet, "his hands trembled . . . his eyes lit up, and he appeared transfigured, as if at the sight of higher, brighter regions, the gates of which had suddenly sprung open. He gasped for air." He responded to poetry with vehemence; a beautiful line would enchant him; a bad one would bring on an almost physical disorder.

With equal passion he worshiped his musical gods. "Gluck, Mozart, Wagner, these be our divine trinity—which Holy Three become One in Beethoven." But he had other gods—in a lesser Pantheon—whom he espoused no less ardently: Berlioz, Schumann and, later, Bruckner.

He was poor, most of the time penniless. But when he had a book in his hand or a copy of a Beethoven sonata, which he would take with him to the Prater, he was unassailable: "Restlessly, I am driven to improve my weak talents, to extend my horizon, to endow my thoughts, my actions, my feelings with as ripe an expression as possible."

When he was eighteen years old, he was still a Bohemian. For the ordinary ways of living he was unfitted. He loved freedom above all, and the life of a music teacher (which he tried for a while) galled him. When he was employed, he earned something like thirty-six gulden during the month, and could scarcely allow himself more than one full meal a day. But his intemperate rages, and his honest dread of mediocrity, lost him many students, so that most of the time he was close to starvation. In 1881 he was recommended as an assistant to Karl Muck at

Salzburg, but here he lasted no more than a few months. His fiery temper made easy intercourse impossible.

But he did not care. No bread; no roof; no bed. Somehow he would survive. Already he was composing his own songs. By 1885 he had no less than fifty, and a symphonic poem, *Penthesilea*, based on Kleist's tragedy.

The storm-tossed vagrant made friends who were glad to give him a home. Edmund Lang offered him an attic in the Trattnerhof. The poet, Hermann Bahr, who lived in the same house and had come home very early one morning after a student *Schmaus*, has described Wolf as he appeared at this time.

Heavy with drink and the enthusiasm of youth, we sought rest. Suddenly, the door opened, and from another room appeared Hugo Wolf, dressed in a very long shirt, and carrying a candle; very pale and strange to look at, in the gray gloomy light; gesticulating now mysteriously, now scurrilously. He laughed shrilly and mocked us. . . . Then he began reading, mostly passages from *Penthesilea*. He did this with such power, that we became silent and dared hardly utter a word. When he spoke, he was great. I have never in my life heard anyone read like him.

In 1884 he became music critic for the *Salonblatt* and let loose his fiery savagery on all that he detested. He, too, was drawn into the Brahms-Wagner-Bruckner feud. Enraged by the increasing smugness and self-satisfaction of the Brahmsites, he launched an embittered attack on Hanslick and Kalbeck.

His own path, he knew, led elsewhere. Brahms was the classicist, the traditionalist, and Wolf thought him almost epigonus and decadent. What new thoughts or musical ideas had Brahms expressed? With what new strength had he endowed music? Once Wolf broke off his playing of a portion of *Lohengrin* and turned to his friend, Eckstein: "No, it can't be otherwise. The true

greatness of a composer you can always recognize in the fact that he can—exult. Wagner can exult. Brahms cannot.”

He sought in music that high degree of excitation which he felt within himself. And Brahms undeniably lacked that.

He composed a string quartet—in D-minor—but the Rosé Quartet rejected it. However, his tone poem, *Penthesilea*, was accepted by Hans Richter for performance by the Vienna Philharmonic. Already at the first rehearsal, on October 15, 1886, it was evident to Wolf that Richter was perpetrating a ghastly jest. The musicians played at random. Richter beat out the time. Then the conductor turned to the orchestra: “Gentlemen, I would not have had this piece performed to the end, were it not that I wanted to see the man who dared to write *that* way about our master, Brahms.”

This was Hans Richter’s vengeance!

Wolf’s father died in 1887, and for the first time he felt unmoored. Not to have fulfilled any of the hopes! Not to have been able to say, even in his twenty-seventh year: “Here, father, you have doubted. Here I am, your son, Hugo Wolf, a musician of note!” To have been able to flatter the last hours with the assurance of success! For a moment revulsion of feeling and despair shook him. He gave up his post with the *Salonblatt*. . . .

The next year opened the miraculous period of creativeness. Suddenly—as if unexpectedly—with a force which he himself did not understand but could merely wonder at, he found his full-blown strength. He was living in Perchtoldsdorf, at a friend’s villa, when the great force of his genius found utterance. Excitement seized him. The poems he had read came to life—those of

Eduard Mörike, the flower of German lyricism. In a few weeks of volcanic creation he had set forty-three lyrics to music. He had found his own voice at last! In astonishment he gazed at his work. "Am I one who has been called—am I of the elect?"

He could not believe his eyes. At the end of the year he brought the number to fifty-three. "All my songs have in truth been composed under strong convulsion. I have often wept while composing them."

Then he turned to Eichendorff's poems. Before long, he had completed two more volumes—seventy songs. The exhilaration he felt then he had to convey to his friends—above all, to the most sympathetic of these, Joseph Schalk. Up four flights of stairs he rushed, in the Jordangasse 7, sat down at the piano and played. Franz Schalk was there; Ferdinand Loewe, the conductor; other sympathetic friends. All of them sat entranced, and spoke words of encouragement.

"*Feuertrunken*" he must have appeared to them.

Day after day, new poems, new thoughts, new ideas. In 1888 he set fifty-one of Goethe's compositions to music in three and a half months.

In moments of lagging inspiration he replenished his spirit with Wagner. He went to Bayreuth, and for a time was completely undone by *Parsifal*. An acquaintance of his, Dr. Zweybrücken, saw him after the night of the performance sitting on a bench in the open, his head buried in his hands. "He seemed completely removed from the world and shaken to the very depths."

The following year, 1889, the poetic *raptus* continued. He discovered the Spanish poems of Geibel and Heyse, and set these to music too. Then came the first of the Italian songs, in 1890. At certain moments fear overcame

him. What if suddenly there should be a drying up of this miraculous fountain? A sudden end? "What a fearful lot for an artist not to have anything new to say. It were a thousand times better to be dead and buried!"

The fountain poured forth ever-fresh streams of song. Not until the end of 1891 was there a pause. After almost four years of uninterrupted creative wonder—silence. The fear which had haunted him now completely paralyzed him. It took three years to break the spell.



In these four years he had re-created the *Lied*. Direct as was his descent from Schubert and Schumann, he would never have peered into the newer regions had it not been for Wagner. His soul-ties were with the great romantics. His love was the love of the romantics—for the warmth of Spain and Italy. In his sickliness and sensibilities he was a romantic. But the idiom in which he spoke looked forward, not back. It was an idiom given shape by Wagner's influence.

The *Lied* in the hands of Schubert and Schumann had sought for ever-closer approximation of tone to word. Wolf carried that tradition forward. More and more intensely he sought to fuse melody and word so that the song became something *gesprochenes*—tended almost to the spoken word. The melody, blended inextricably with declamation, became ever more closely wedded to the text—so much so that it often seemed that text and music had been fashioned by one hand. The melody required newer modulation, new harmonic accompaniments to give it full expression. Already there were intervals,

modulations, harmonic progressions that were living anticipations of later schools of music.

One listens to a song like Eichendorff's *Nachtzauber* and becomes conscious of how the entire poem—every line, every phrase, every word—has become alive and individualized through its musical context. The voice is set off against the background of a wonderfully distant accompaniment—suggestive, as even the romantics were never to be—of night, and the far-off rushing of waters.

Only a very acute sensibility, a nervous mechanism responsive in every cell, could have extracted from every poem its *essence* in the way that Wolf did. Only a poet who had drunk in the suggestions of Wagnerian tradition, and had fully understood the Wagnerian dream of marrying word to tone, could have brought to these poems the newer melodic life. No one who listens to the closing lines of *Nachtzauber* or the marvelous last softened chords of *Gesegnet sei durch den die Welt entstand* can escape the feeling that here Wagner's star has shone with benign influence; that, in a way, Hugo Wolf is himself the Wagner of the newer German *Lied*.

## 18

THE second act of the Habsburg tragedy found its principal character in Crown Prince Rudolph.

Rudolph had from his early childhood been a source of worry to his parents. Like his mother, he was nervous, violent, rebellious, eager to live and act. Not even the rigorous, if sympathetic, tutelage of his master, Latour,

had succeeded in changing him. His growing intellect only increased the restlessness in him.

Elizabeth was rarely at court now. Almost always she was abroad, wandering feverishly, no one knew in search of what. And Francis Joseph was not the man to encourage the affections of his son. He treated him with civility, but civility was not what Rudolph asked for. The father was systematic, efficient, hard-working; the son was passionate, eager, excitable. His feverish mind turned to science, but could not be satisfied. He longed to *act*. He wanted a portion of the responsibilities of government. But he was doomed to the fate of an Austrian heir presumptive, to anticipate but not to share in the burdens of state, to inherit the fruit of other men's errors, while he was impotent to act. When he protested, his father made him—inspector of the army!

He ripened fast. He observed much. He became even more outspoken. When he was only fifteen he had set down some thoughts on politics:

The monarchy stands there, a mighty ruin, which may last today and tomorrow, but which will finally disappear altogether. It has endured for centuries, and as long as the people were willing to be led blindly all was well; but now the end has come. All men are free, and in the next conflict down goes the ruin.

The winds of doctrine, the noisy clash of ideas—to which the court appeared deaf—penetrated into the quiet of his rooms. He was aware, as he walked silently through the corridors, of warnings and omens which he wished to communicate. His father would not listen to him. Rudolph's time would come, the Emperor assured him, *his* time to act. But now, no meddling in the Emperor's affairs.

In the hushed halls of the palace, Rudolph was another stranger—ghastlier than his late uncle Maximilian, for Rudolph possessed a greater clarity of intellect, a premonitory vision. Everywhere around him was blindness. When he spoke there was dismay. Startled whispers grew into dangerous rumors. Every move was watched. Every word was carried to the Emperor.

In his early twenties, and already filled with a sense of frustration and defeat!

In 1881 he married the Princess Stephanie of Coburg, and soon discovered that his wife was dull, unresponsive and commonplace. Another failure!

He sought out friends to whom he could open his heart. To the scandal of the court they were questionable characters—journalists, liberals, Jews. In conversation with them, in letters, he expressed his fears.

There was much to dread. What he had said when he was fifteen had been no childish foolishness. Now, as he recalled his words, they seemed truer than ever. The tides of hatred and confusion were mounting; and nowhere was there more clamor and greater chaos than in Parliament.

\* \* \*

The “liberal” constitution of 1861, wrested from the monarchy by fear after the calamities of Solferino, had given Austria a “representative” government, founded on indirect elections and heavily weighted in favor of feudal landlords, the clergy, aristocrats, wealthy merchants and Germans. Racial hatreds had mounted, and each concession nationalism had exacted had only whetted the appetite for more. Hungary was now almost completely independent. The dual monarchy had now to

face the problem of curbing the equally persistent demands of other nationalities. That so hybrid a state was held together at all was a miracle. Mutual distrust, hatred and animosity effected what unity could not. For the Magyar who wanted independence oppressed the Croat; the Pole oppressed the Ruthenian; the German, the Slav. Magyar landlord feared and oppressed Magyar peasants, and to preserve his power was ready to join with his German enemy. Federalism, centralism, feudalism, constitutionalism, nationalism, pan-Germanism, irredentism, liberalism—the battle of these was carried on through the years with increasing vehemence and cynicism. In the Parliament, interminable debate and little action. The Cabinet now yielded to Slav pressure, now to Magyar, now to German. Whatever it did was sure to antagonize someone. In the country a growing working class demanded the vote. Paradoxes without end. Reactionaries raising the bludgeon of universal suffrage to frighten liberals, Jews and feudal landlords. Everywhere the fear of the people.

On the floor of Parliament cynical expressions of defeatism. Count Edward Taaffe, minister of the interior, lived longer in office than most others, coined the term *Fortwursteln*—colloquial and meatier Viennese for “muddling through.” He also said: “One must keep all nationalities in a state of well-tempered discontent.” Deputy Gregl said: “Austria is something worse than an absolute state. It is a state run by bureaucratic despots under the guise of Constitutionalism.”

As if there were not trouble enough already, the Congress of Berlin had in 1878—after the Russo-Turkish War—allowed Austria to occupy and administer the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thus created

a new problem: Serbian irredentism. "The gate of the Orient is open to Your Majesty," said Count Julius Andrásy.

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Rudolph looked around him in despair, certain that all of European civilization was doomed.

As a quiet observer, I am curious to know how long it will be before so long and enduring a structure as Austria will crack in all its joints and fall asunder.

He hated Germany; he hated and feared Russia; but he admired the French. His republicanism and internationalism caused no small outcry.

I regard all national and racial animosities as an awful retrogression, and it is most significant that it is just the most reactionary elements who worship and exploit these ideas all over Europe.

His most sympathetic confidant was Moritz Szeps, the liberal editor of the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, for the pages of which Rudolph wrote frequently—a matter that did not escape the attention of his enemies. More and more he found himself at odds with the policies of his father and those of the archenemy, Edward Taaffe. Fear of impending ruin gripped him. He sometimes allowed himself dangerous thoughts.

We are living in evil times—graft, theft, rabble in high places, the crudest despotism, hand-to-mouth makeshifts. The State is gliding toward ruin. . . . Verily, old Europe is tottering toward its grave. A great powerful upheaval must come, a social revolution from which, as after a long illness, a new Europe will blossom.

At times he believed that Austria could be saved in his day, if only the army (in which he had great faith) would take things into its own hands.

More and more am I persuaded that serious, perhaps bloody, days are ahead, and that for a short while or long, the army—as the last champion of the state idea, of law and order—will have to intervene to save the bourgeoisie and imperial organization.

Did he, for a few moments at least, see himself at the head of the army—the liberator?

His detractors were not idle. Gossip whispered of madness, of intemperance, of rash and unspeakable thoughts, if not deeds.

When he was thirty he wrote:

Thirty years mean a great period, if not one to rejoice over; much time is gone, spent more or less usefully, but devoid of real deeds and successes. We live in a tottering, decaying age. Who knows how long things still can drag on? And every year makes one older, less vigorous and less able.

He waited, as he added, “eternally prepared” for something that did not happen, in “eternal expectancy of great things to come.”

Already a feeling of decay, of death. . . .

When he was thirty he met the beautiful Baroness Marie Vetsera, then seventeen. “Her complexion was lovely, her red, voluptuous mouth parted over sharp little white teeth, her eyes deep blue, with curling lashes set off by finely marked eyebrows.”

We can see him as he was then, almost always sad, his head fine and sensitive, his mustache rather full, his eyes deep and dreamy—not handsome, but striking in appearance.

Their love affair brought fresh fuel to the gossip and scandal of the court. To escape from them Rudolph bought a secluded hunting lodge, Mayerling, outside of Vienna, where he could carry on his affair in secrecy.

On January 27, 1889, the German ambassador to Austria, Prince Heinrich VII von Reuss, held a formal

reception in honor of the thirtieth birthday of Wilhelm II, to which the imperial family was invited. At that reception the Crown Princess Stephanie and Baroness Marie Vetsera met face to face. Marie Vetsera held her head high. She did not offer the Crown Princess the obeisance to which her station entitled her.

The next day there was a stormy scene in the imperial palace. Emperor Francis Joseph sternly reminded Archduke Rudolph of his duty to his country, of the disgrace he was bringing to the House of Habsburg. He demanded that the affair be ended without further delay.

On January 30, 1889, Rudolph of Habsburg and Marie Vetsera were found dead in Mayerling.

What took place at the hunting lodge on the fatal night of their death is a question which dramatists, novelists and historians have frequently attempted to answer. From the mass of solutions and explanations arises this fresh query: Could it have been that not love alone drove Rudolph to suicide, but also the cumulative tragedy and decay of the House of Austria?

## 19

ANTON BRUCKNER was now close to seventy. The arid and silly controversy which sought to extol him at the expense of Brahms, or Brahms at his expense, was by no means over. But both bright archangels were now very much older. Their work lay behind them; and the bitterness of their hosts had become less violent with the years. What more was there to be said? Brahms had said his last word concerning Bruckner; and Bruckner, his last word concerning Brahms.

On the eighteenth of December, 1892, Bruckner experienced his sweetest moment of triumph. Richter was conducting the Eighth Symphony for the first time. Once more the opposing camps had gathered to do battle. Hanslick, too, was there; and before the close he stalked off in disgust. This was the signal for the Brucknerites. They booed the critic and cheered the musicians, insisting that Bruckner himself come up to the platform. Max Kalbeck, once an archfoe, was driven to cover—forced to admit that Bruckner was a master of instrumentation. Hugo Wolf, whose veneration for Bruckner was always on this side idolatry, rapturously exclaimed: "The first movement renders all criticism futile. The *Adagio* is absolutely incomparable. Only in a thousand years will this work be understood."

Bruckner's seventieth birthday was the occasion for nation-wide celebration. After fifty years of struggle, he had won the battle. The last of his works he heard performed was the *Te Deum* in 1896. In the summer of that year he fell ill. And on October 11—he had that day been working on the final draft of the Ninth Symphony—he died. His body was buried underneath the organ loft of St. Florian's—as he had asked.

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Brahms's day, too, was drawing to an end. One by one his friends died: von Bülow, Billroth and, dearest of all, Clara Schumann. He himself had begun to ail; the yellow jaundice set in. He continued working. Some time before he had completed the *Four Serious Songs*, on the text of *Ecclesiasticus*—and was much concerned with the thought of death. Now in Carlsbad in September, 1896, he turned to other compositions. When he returned to Vienna he

had the marks of death on him. Max Kalbeck saw him then and was appalled: "His appearance was pitiful. His clothes hung from his body and flapped loosely, his body was shrunken, and his Olympian head fell forward wearily."

But he insisted on attending theaters and concerts. His sharp wit still played pranks, although now frequently punctuated with melancholy. In his rooms in the Karlsgasse he received his hosts of friends.

On March 7, 1897, he attended a Philharmonic concert under Richter, at which his Fourth Symphony was performed. He sat in the artists' box. When the members of the orchestra spied him, they rose in tribute. The audience, too, was shaken by the event, a farewell to Vienna's greatest composer. Florence May, who was in the audience, has described the scene.

A storm of applause broke out at end of the first movement, not to be quieted until the composer, coming to the front of the artists' box in which he was seated, showed himself to the audience. The demonstration was renewed after the second and third movements, and an extraordinary scene followed the conclusion of the work. The applauding, shouting house its gaze riveted on the figure standing in the balcony, so familiar, and yet in its present aspect so strange, seemed unable to let him go. Tears ran down his cheeks as he stood there, shrunken in form, with lined countenance strained expression, white hair hanging lank; and throughout the audience there was a feeling of a stifled sob, for each knew that they were saying farewell.

Another outburst of applause, and yet another. One more acknowledgment from the master. Then Brahms and his Vienna parted forever.

One month later he died.

The funeral, which took place on April 6, was elaborate. All the city took part. Official Vienna was there too in the notable figures of the mayor and governmental representatives. The eulogies were eloquent. In the

presence of death, the Viennese discovered the full magnificence of the genius who had lived with them for more than a generation.

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And last of all—Johann Strauss—and with him the nineteenth century.

It seemed that he would never grow old. His marriage had proved very happy. Fame could give him nothing more. When his hair turned slightly gray he had it dyed—thus the Viennese preferred him, like his own waltzes, always going round and round, but returning to one place. His energy scarcely ever gave out. "*Lasst uns lustig sein.*"—"Let us be merry!" He worked from early morning till noon, interrupted his musical labor with a game of billiards; then back to work. At night more work. In the concert halls great pianists had played his waltzes: Rubinstein, Grünfeld, Liszt.

At a performance of *Fürstin Ninetta*, the two emperors met—Emperor Johann Strauss and Emperor Francis Joseph. "I have had a wonderful time," the Emperor of Austria said. "It is strange. Your music, like yourself, never grows older. Why, you haven't changed at all—and I haven't seen you for a long time. I felicitate you on your opera!"

The Emperor had called the operetta an "opera." Well, he'd have to write an opera—nothing less than the beautiful Hofoper for his work. He wrote one—*Ritter Pazman*. It was stilted, artificial—operatic. Not Johann Strauss. . . .

In 1894, the fiftieth anniversary of his first appearance as a conductor! Fifty years of waltzes! The Emperor was right. It *was* incredible. From Berlin, from Hamburg,

from Munich, from Petersburg, from far-off America came the gratulatory words.

He had completed a new operetta for the Hofoper. Gustav Mahler, no less, had undertaken to direct it—when, in May, 1899, he fell ill with a cold. On the first of June he sat up in bed and in a delirium sang a song of Raimund's:

*Brüderlein fein! Brüderlein fein!  
Darfst mir ja nicht böse sein!  
Scheint die Sonne noch so schön,  
Einmal muss sie untergeh'n. . . .*

He died on June 3—and with him died imperial Vienna.

On the afternoon of his death the Strauss orchestra in the Volksgarten was performing Johann Strauss music. When the word of the death reached the conductor he stopped the music in the middle of a phrase, announced the sad news to his audience. Then, after a few moments of reverent silence, he directed the orchestra in a pianissimo performance of the *Blue Danube Waltz*.

## 20

THE myths which gathered around the Empress Elizabeth grew in number. While she had never been too close to her son, Rudolph, his death unsettled her. The figure that had once been graceful and winsome, the face whose beauty had enchanted the courts of Europe—these were now older, wearier. She was always sad now, always dressed in black. And she had grown harder.

Her husband treated her with great civility, indulged her every wish—wherever she might be—wrote her kind

letters. But there was no love in them, only good breeding and decorum. For her part, she avoided the court and wandered—most frequently incognito—to Madeira, to Egypt, to Smyrna, to Normandy.

Her name was spoken less and less frequently at court—and then only in connection with some whispered scandal or new excess. But she was not even touched by common rumor. She wrapped herself in her melancholy, surrounded herself with books she had loved, and gallant men, and gazed hungrily out at the sea. It was hopeless now to undo the warped pattern of her life. The devil's work had been finished even before she had been old enough to understand. The most one could do now was to smooth down the roughness of it—to attain some kind of peace.

For one great tragic moment she had raised her head—when she took it upon herself to inform the Emperor of their son's death. Thereafter nothing really mattered.

She was vacationing in Geneva in 1898. On September 10 she was on her way to board an excursion boat. An Italian, Luccheni, pressed close to her and thrust a sharp file into her breast. Undaunted, ignorant of the seriousness of the wound, she boarded the boat—but very soon she fainted. When she was brought back to the hotel she was dead.

This third act of the Habsburg drama took place during the fiftieth anniversary of the Emperor's accession. It was an eerie doom which hung over the house: its poets, dreamers and visionaries were to go down to destruction. But he, the pedestrian, unromantic and unpoetic "subaltern," passionate only in the fulfillment of his duty, lived on and on. . . .

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BOOK FIVE

TWILIGHT

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FRANCIS JOSEPH grew old with dignity. When Elizabeth died, he was sixty-eight years old. Save for his gray hair, there were few marks of age upon him. In his bearing, in his routine, in mind he was no different from what he had been thirty years before.

He seemed, in fact, ageless. To many of his subjects—younger men and women—he became a symbol of the Empire, the life of which was now inextricably bound up with his own.

Two passions governed him. One was the passion to preserve intact the monarchy. The other was a passion for peace. In proportion as chaos and the clamor around him grew and threatened to wreck both his hopes, he came to hold on to them with ever-stronger intensity. For their sake he was forced from one compromise to another; from one policy to another; from one Cabinet minister to another.

The larger issues of statesmanship and politics—those which might perhaps have averted the final catastrophe—never penetrated into his bare rooms in the Hofburg. Nor could he have understood them if they had. For he was a man made for the small business of the day, and in the fulfillment of this he had few equals. More than ever now he immersed himself in the thousands of tasks which his day's work involved—from morning till late at night he labored at reports, protocols, messages. Nothing was too mean to escape his attention or interest; a birthday of a princess, an official ceremony, a marriage, a curious occurrence in his realm.

And with age he grew more meticulous in his insistence on etiquette. His court physician was rebuked once because in an emergency (the Emperor had fallen ill suddenly) he had dared to appear without his customary frock coat.

His later years of loneliness were lightened by his friendship with an actress of the Burgtheater, Kathi Schratt. Soft, genial and *echt bürgerlich*, she came to mean much to the Emperor, harried as he was by hundreds of duties and entirely deprived of the sympathy of a woman. He liked small talk, and she gossiped with him. He liked her ease. He, who could rarely unbend, felt free in her presence. She was warm and sympathetic and at least partly consoled him for the absence of Elizabeth.

The Empress herself, it was believed, had some time in 1884 brought them together and had encouraged their friendship. The Emperor was fifty-four and past the ardors of love. Kathi was the *Hausfrau* soon to be married. In Hietzing, in Ischl and, after Elizabeth's death, in the villa the Emperor bought for Kathi near Schönbrunn, he enjoyed, during the many hours he spent with her, the quiet serenity of domesticity which had been denied him in his own home.

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In a smaller state he might have grown to be a lovable old patriarch. But here his children were numerous and unruly. He had not yet found the way to govern them. He still "ruled" them as he had in 1848, through a personal Cabinet, which got things done while Parliament wrangled. He was a constitutional monarch; but the country was governed through the back door. As before, when a policy proved a failure, he was not given

to analysis. He merely avenged himself by changing ministers. He was never afraid of contradicting himself.

What historian looking back upon the early years of this century can fail to be struck by the pathos of the old man, standing almost alone in a sea of class conflicts, oppression, national ferment and aspirations, with nothing but his personality and the magic words he had inherited from 1848 to calm the waves?

In his household schism once more. The heir to the throne, Francis Ferdinand, was headstrong, ambitious and aggressive. He had insisted on marrying the Countess Chotek, far below him in rank. The Emperor, for whom the principle of legitimacy had the force of religious dogma, sought in vain to batter down the obstinacy of his nephew. When he failed, he formally exacted a renunciation of Francis Ferdinand's children's right to the throne.

But in other ways, too, the time-honored rancor between ruler and heir presumptive was kept alive. The Archduke was a fanatic, a reactionary, an absolutist—arrogant and implacable. He despised the makeshift policies of the Emperor and of his numerous ministers. He saw—clearly enough—the drift toward ruin. He set himself against the uncle, quarreled with him openly, and finally wrested some measure of power from him—partial control of the army. From his palace, the Belvedere, he directed machinations against the policies of the Hofburg.

For despite his intransigence, Francis Ferdinand was a keener man than Francis Joseph. He understood, as the Emperor never could, the destructive forces within the empire, saw that until the problem of the Slavs within the empire was solved there could be not even partial

peace. And he knew that the most violent enemies of the policy of conciliation toward the Slavs were the Magyar feudal lords, whose power was threatened by an extension of rights to the others. That is why Francis Ferdinand hated the Magyars; that is why he preached a federated state—a United States of Austria. That is why he was in constant conflict with the Emperor and his advisers.

The Austro-Hungarian caldron seethed. Within the empire and without, what appeared to be irresistible forces were driving toward a war. The formal annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908; the Balkan crisis of 1912; the inflamed national passions of the Serbs, outraged by the treatment of their country by Austria and of their countrymen within Austrian borders; the blind Habsburg policy, dictated by Hungarian and German imperialists, of exploiting mercilessly the newly acquired lands, driving the Slavs openly into the arms of Russia; the stupid Magyar policy of crushing their minorities—these were the problems that faced a powerless ruler, a vacillating and uncertain ministry, and a divided Parliament.

And outside the empire there were threats that could no longer be disregarded: the growing commercial rivalry of England and Germany; France's eagerness to avenge the humiliation of 1870; Russia covetously eyeing Constantinople, and stronger now than ever in the Balkans. In Paris, Isvolsky and Poincaré were cementing an alliance of England, France and Russia with which to strangle Austria and Germany.

And within the empire there was the insistent and no longer negligible voice of the proletariat—demanding some share of political power and universal suffrage.

In Vienna a tremendous working-class demonstration—quiet but impressive—lent visible strength to the demands.

In 1908 the Emperor celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of his accession. He was now seventy-eight years old. For a few moments, amidst rejoicing and ceremonies, there was a breathing space from thought.

But what Austrian statesman was there wise or courageous enough to cope with the multitude of problems? It was easier to speak of an approaching doom—and shrug one's shoulders. Or perhaps to look forward to salvation through war. Thus Conrad von Hötzendorf, chief of staff, advised a quick, crushing defeat of the Serbians—before the clumsy Russian bear, not yet recovered from the beating of 1905, might bestir himself.

But the weary Emperor said: "My policy is that of peace."

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"I LOOK forward to a rosy future. May God allow you to live to see this dawn which at last is breaking in my life," Hugo Wolf wrote to his mother in 1897.

He was now thirty-seven. For the first time he had begun to feel the warmth of his own hearth. He, the bird of passage, was settled in his own home, in the Schwindgasse. Kind friends provided the furniture; friends also saw to his comfort—for in these matters he was still a helpless child.

"Now may God only grant me a few good ideas, and I shall be the happiest man under the sun."

The dreary past became less oppressive. Only the present mattered—the bright present. There were concerts now which might be called successful. There were new friends who understood him and bore with his volcanolike passion for the sake of his genius. And, in 1897, there was even the anticipation of fame with the establishment of the Hugo Wolf Society by Haberlandt, and the ever-growing numbers of his admirers whom neither calumny nor disdain could shake.

The bitter years became a dimmer and dimmer memory: the laughter and riot which had taken place at one of the Vienna concerts in 1889; the stupidity of the Austrian police who censured the “licentiousness” of the poetry he had set to music; Kalbeck and Hanslick’s all-too-influential enmity; the indifference of his own city—when his name had already spread to other parts of Germany; the burden of poverty and want (his published songs had in five years brought him 86 marks and 35 pfennigs!).

But he minded failure little. Delicate, shy, nervous as ever, sensitive to the point of morbidity, and explosive, he could bear defeat with an inward strength that sometimes taxed him to the breaking point. But he was once again in possession of his creative powers—and he was invincible.

In November, 1891, the Burgtheater produced Ibsen’s *Fest at Solhoug* for which Wolf had written the incidental music. In 1894 he attracted a greater degree of attention with his *Elfenlied* and *Der Feuerreiter*; and even Hanslick offered a condescending word of praise and warning: “Doubtless a man of talent, but let him beware of his good friends.”

He knew himself fitted for more ambitious tasks. In

he had wanted to set a story of Alarcón's, *The Three-cornered Hat*, to music—for he had been attracted by the plot no less than by his dream to re-create Spanish life. Rosa Mayreder now prepared the text for him. Aided by a generous subvention from a friend, and the quiet which it assured, he set to work. By the end of the year the opera—*Der Corregidor*—was ready. He hoped the Vienna Court Opera might produce it, but Director Wilhelm Jahn rejected it as hopeless. Where Vienna failed, a smaller German town proved more hospitable. *Der Corregidor* was performed in Mannheim in June, 1896, and the composer, who had sat trembling with excitement and anticipation in the galleries, was now thrust forward by friends to accept the applause of the audience.

Now in 1897 fresh hope animated him. The new director of the Vienna Opera, Gustav Mahler—an intrepid innovator—promised to produce the work. However, in a later and more sober moment, he regretted his promise; and finally he, too, rejected *Der Corregidor* as too “unoperatic.”

Alarcón's satire on a local government official who attempts to seduce the wife of a miller required a deft and light hand, and above all else, movement. Rosa Mayreder's play was unwieldy and heavy. Wolf's music strove to give life to a disconnected plot. Though he filled the drama with some of his loveliest lyrics—many built on Spanish folk melodies; though in the musical portions he evoked the glamour of the Spanish south, he could not give the work continuity, movement and design. The shadow of *Die Meistersinger* fell across his work; but Wolf was not the man to compose another *Meistersinger*, even if a greater poet than Mayreder had composed the words. And so *Der Corregidor* remains a

beautiful series of lovely gemlike fragments—but not an opera.

The failure to obtain a hearing at the Court Opera upset him. His nervous organism—sustained, it seemed, even to this time, by a miracle, but almost always on the point of breaking—now gave way completely. He was then in the midst of composing another opera, *Manuel Venegas*. On September 19, 1897, he began his aimless wandering at three o'clock in the morning. The friends, whom in turn he sought out, failed at first to gauge the symptoms. They had seen him distraught before. He spoke of himself as the director of the Vienna Opera, raved in anger at his "subordinates." In the evening he sat down at the piano and played a portion of *Die Meistersinger*. Suddenly his memory gave way. He became hysterical and violent.

He was brought to a sanatorium, from which he was released one year later. But a relapse followed, and he attempted to drown himself. He asked to be confined in an institution. Here he lived his last years, in heart-breaking solitude. In the world outside his fame grew—but the little man with the pale, thin face and the blazing eyes was past understanding or caring about it.

He died in February, 1903. The funeral ceremonies at the Votivkirche were but another instance of belated tribute to one of Vienna's greatest sons. The bitter words of the poet, Liliencron, written in praise of Wolf thirteen years before, had remained true to the end:

And while you sang your flaming songs,  
Our dear Germans passed you by,  
And in their pockets they carried  
Tickets to "Mamselle Nitouche."  
And burning shame overspread my face  
For these our countrymen

Who would not listen to you,  
 Who knew nothing  
 Of their own great poet, Mörike. . .  
 And I exclaimed:  
 "Make way, make way, you cattle,  
 Make way for a king!"  
 But our dear Germans  
 Hastily felt for their tickets  
 To "Mamselle Nitouche,"  
 And quickly they ran  
 To "Mamselle Nitouche."

## 3

THE man who since 1897 ruled the destinies of the Court Opera was the Jew, Gustav Mahler. Thirty-seven years old (he was born in the same year as Hugo Wolf), he returned to Vienna bringing with him a legendary reputation as conductor and composer. When he was fifteen, he had come to Vienna for the first time from his native Bohemia to study at the Conservatory, where he soon won first prizes in piano playing and composition. Then had come the *Wanderjahre*—Prague, Leipzig and finally the Opera in Hamburg.

Wherever he went he brought with him a demoniac and uncompromising spirit, a sense of musical discipline and irrepressible energy—almost fury—which demanded perfection. Wherever he went he made enemies. For one, he was a Jew. In addition, he was uncompromisingly honest, rarely mincing words of harsh criticism when they were deserved. He had always been the fighter. In the provincial opera companies—where mediocrity ruled—he had contended with mockery, slovenliness, lack of discipline. His demands for perfection were even

then relentless, and appeared strange to the puny singers and musicians who did not and would not understand him.

And now he came to Vienna, in spite of obstacles, in spite of his race, in spite of evil rumors, brought to his post at the Court Opera through the glowing recommendations of Brahms, Guido Adler, and a few singers of note.

And even in Vienna he met malice, enmity and opposition. At the Court Opera he found tradition strongly entrenched, and of smug tradition he was always a savage foe. "Tradition," he said, "is only *Schlamperei!*"

During the ten years he remained with the Court Opera he transformed it into the first of the world's musical institutions. Everything was subjected to his scrupulous criticism. He dismissed old singers whose voices had long since faded, and replaced them with younger and fresher artists. These younger singers were to grow and mature under him and to create in Vienna a standard of operatic singing unequaled elsewhere—singers like Leo Slezak, Berta Förster-Lauterer, Anna von Mildenburg, Richard Mayr, Selma Kurz and Marie Gutheil-Schoder. He initiated drastic reforms in stage direction, engaged a new technical director whose invention made possible the reduction of the dimensions of the stage for presentation of more intimate operas. He insisted on a thorough renovation of scenery. Everything that took place in the opera house was dominated by his fanatical will. He laid down a law that no one in the audience was to come late to a performance, refusing to seat anyone during the first act. He banished the claque.

He enlarged the repertoire and included such novelties as Verdi's *Falstaff*, Tschaikovsky's *Iolanthe*, Wolf-Ferrari's

*The Inquisitive Women*, Goetz's *Taming of the Shrew*. But most important of all, he insisted upon subjecting to new study and analysis all the operas that had been performed repeatedly before him. He demanded a literal treatment of every score, precision, exactness, respect for the smallest detail. He held that the composer was greater than any performer, and exacted from all—and, most, from himself—reverence for a work of art. Fastidiously he rehearsed the operas of Wagner and Mozart and Beethoven as though they were new works. Self-willed tenors and spoiled prima donnas rebelled at the arduous ordeal. They plotted behind his back; they called him names. But he treated all alike, subordinated them and himself to the work at hand.

The works which emerged from his hand were fresh and new—"herrlich wie am ersten Tag." It almost seemed to his audiences that they had never heard Wagner before, or *Don Giovanni*, or *Così fan tutte*, or *Fidelio*, or *Euryanthe*.

He had [as his biographer, Paul Stefan, put it] an aim which only Wagner before him had sought with such tenacity to attain: Distinctness. The experience of many years had given him unerring knowledge of the capabilities of every instrument, of the possibilities of every score. Distinctness for him was an exact ratio of light and shade. His *crescendi*, his storms, growing from bar to bar, now taking breath for a moment, now crashing into *fortissimo*; his climaxes, obtained by the simplest means; his whispering *pianissimo*; his instinct for needful alternation of tranquillity and agitation; his sense of sharpness in the melodic line; all these were elements which went to make up his power.

Gradually he beat down mediocrity and opposition. When he stood in the orchestra pit and caught the least aberration of one of his musicians with his miraculously precise ear; or when he charged his performers with the galvanic energy of his personality; or when he raced

from the pit and jumped upon the stage to emphasize a minute point to the singer—those who worked under him, those with eyes and ears, could not help feeling that they were in the presence of greatness. At first they laughed at him. Then they came to marvel. The singer, Theodore Reichmann, began by calling him a “Jewish monkey,” but ended by worshiping him as the “God Mahler.”

There he stood, with his shaggy mane, his thick eyeglasses, his eagle nose, his face, thin, worn, passionate, intense, almost otherworldly and ascetic in appearance—a small man with an electrically charged brain and body, quick of movement, completely alive in every fiber. “*Flamme bin ich sicherlich*”—Nietzsche might have been speaking of him. His was an unquenchable flame which burned steadily, fiercely. To some of his hearers he seemed a madman, arrogant, uncompromising. But to others, who came to know him and understand him, he was a “saint.”

#### 4

HE had inexhaustible energy. Already before his arrival in Vienna he had composed three symphonies. Throughout his life he worked restlessly, dividing his time between the innumerable burdens as director of the Opera and conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the richer ecstasy of creation.

In himself he epitomized both a dying and a new century. With passionate intellectual curiosity—which was limitless—he sought for a *Weltanschauung*. It became the great task of his life to transmute this intellectual

and moral search into musical terms. As a composer he was the last of the great romanticists who sought to embody a mystical sense of some transcendent truth in music. "All my works," he once said, "are anticipations of a future life."

Many strangely divergent currents of thought united in him—a Talmudic strain, Faust's inordinate striving for knowledge, Dostoyevsky's moral lacerations, Schopenhauer's resignation and Nietzsche's hope. Above all, the Jew and the pagan united in him—the deeply religious sense and the passionate affirmation of the earthly.

The turmoil of the century was in his blood. Already in his early years pessimism and a sense of isolation darkened his life—for he was a Jew and an artist in an inhospitable world. When he was only twenty, he wrote: "Do you know a happy man on this earth? Name him quickly; before I lose a little more of my courage to live." Somewhat later he wrote again:

The great question is this: *Why have you lived?* Why have you suffered? Is all this nothing but a huge and horrible jest? We *must* solve these problems in some way, if we are to continue living—yes, even if we are merely to continue dying!

This darkness of spirit was, in fact, never to leave him. It was embodied in the funeral movements of the Second Symphony, in the elegiac Fifth Symphony, and in the indescribably beautiful farewell of *Das Lied von der Erde*.

But his pessimism was tempered with courage and hope. When he was thirty-four, he read Nietzsche. "I have this week completed reading works so remarkable that they seem destined to have an epoch-making influence on my life." Nietzsche gave him the strength to live, the strength to accept the struggle, the strength to say "yes" to life.

It was, perhaps, this passionate, almost painful search for certainty, and the unsparing dedication of himself, that inspired so many of his disciples—Arnold Schönberg particularly—with his “holiness.”

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When I conceive a large musical work [he wrote in 1897], I always arrive at a point where I am compelled to draw upon the “word” as the bearer of my musical ideas—likewise it must have happened with Beethoven in his Ninth, except that his time did not offer him suitable materials. For at bottom, the poem by Schiller is not adapted to the formulation of the unheard—which was present in his mind. . . . It happened to me that while I was composing the second movement, that I searched through all of world literature, even through the Bible, in order to find the saving word:—and finally I was forced to find my own words for my feelings and thoughts.

Through the “word” he sought to find his musical expression. More consciously than any composer before him he sought to give an intellectual content to symphonic form, sought to make the word and the idea a portion of the symphony. Not “program music” was his aim, as he insisted again and again. His aspiration was to make the voice, the conveyor of the word, an integral part of the orchestra.

Like Bruckner, he was possessed by a passion for greatness. In scope his symphonies were to transcend those written before. For he desired nothing less than to give musical voice to the “complete man.” He wished to write a metaphysical symphony.

The “saving word” he sought to express in nine mighty symphonies, in a projected tenth, and in a great song cycle. The struggles that went on within him were present in all his work—the dichotomy of affirming and denying, the clash of Dionysus with Christ, the constant dream of fusing opposites. The first of his greater works—the Second Symphony—opens with momentous

rumblings of discontent. It is Mahler asking "Why?" It ends with the note of resignation, the choral parts of which were verses by Klopstock.

*Glaube mein Herz  
Es geht dir nichts verloren . . .  
Sterben werd' ich zum leben.*

The passionate struggle is relieved only for a moment by the sunlit charm of the second movement—for even the impressive certainty of the choral parts is touched with doubt.

But the pagan within him always strove with the Christian. And so he wrote the Third Symphony—a Dionysian song—a pagan poem written with the pen of St. Francis. "Pan Awakes. . . . What the flowers in the meadow tell me. . . . What the animals of the forest tell me. . . . What the Angel tells me. . . . What Love tells me. . . ." These are Mahler's notes. The brasses blare forth the approach of spring; the flowers sway in the wind ("I have noticed," Mahler wrote, "that my basses today are playing only *pizzicato*"); and the chorus of angels sings the final paean to love. . . .

He was himself aware that this "paganism," which seemed to affirm creation, had something of bravado about it. For when he completed his Eighth Symphony—that of a "thousand voices"—he wrote to Richard Specht:

In all my previous works there has been subjective tragedy; this is the great giver of joy.

And to Willem Mengelberg:

It is the greatest thing I have created thus far. . . . And so unusual in content and form, that I cannot put it into words. Imagine that the universe

begins to sound and ring out! It is no longer the voice of man, but that of planets and suns in their circling motions.

And so again he reached after the impossible: wrote a mighty symphony of "eternal love" with eight soloists, two choruses, an immense orchestra with eight horns, four trumpets, four trombones; wrote a symphony in two vast movements, the first built up on the words of the Latin hymn, *Veni creator spiritus*, the other based upon the last scene in the second part of Goethe's *Faust* and ending with the words "*Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis.*"

Yet his greatest work is his simplest—*Das Lied von der Erde*. Here, as never before, the man's loneliness broke through and could no longer be concealed even by intoxication. The Chinese poems which were set to music—delicately traced poems in praise of wine and life and the good earth—are themselves touched with the sad bravado of the condemned. It is perhaps because of this sense of an impending end that in Mahler's hands these poems are swept by passion-laden force. The cry for "more wine" is arrested by a sense of doom. "*Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.*"—"Dark is Life, and dark is Death."

Never before had Mahler found the voice with which to express this sense of desolation of which he now spoke in the last of these poems, the *Farewell*. Death was here—and no "Ressurrection" symphony nor a symphony to "eternal love" could conceal the grim truth. Freed for moments from the Faustian urge to express the inexpressible, for a passion to embrace the meaning of a universe in its entirety, Mahler was now, at the end of his life, forced back upon himself.

## 5

*Mein Herz ist müde. Meine kleine Lampe  
Erlosch mit Knistern, es gemahnt mich an den Schlaf  
Ich komm' zu dir, traute Ruhestätte!  
Ja, gib mir Ruh', ich hab' Erquickung not!*

My heart is weary. My little lamp has spluttered out,  
It calls me to rest.  
I come to thee, beloved place of rest,  
Yes, give me rest, I have need of solace!

WHEN Mahler put to music this Chinese verse in *Das Lied von der Erde* he was giving expression to the great tragedy of his own life. He was overwhelmed by the "turmoil of the century in his blood" no less than by a crushing personal loss which haunted him until his death.

In 1902 he married Alma Maria Schindler. A few years later their young daughter died of scarlet fever.

He faced bitter disappointments as a composer as well. His first three symphonies were received with growing antagonism. "I am sorry to report that the enemy was victorious," he wrote sadly. "The papers will tear me to pieces." The Fifth and Sixth symphonies, introduced in Essen, were also failures.

These rebuffs sometimes embittered him. When a friend commented upon the tragic content of the Fifth Symphony, Mahler told him: "It is the sum of all the suffering I have been compelled to endure at the hands of life."

Things were not going well at the Vienna Court Opera either. Despite his magnificent performances

and the transformations he had brought to the opera house, despite the worship of a small group of artists, he met venom, intrigues, hatred and antagonism. Indolent singers rebelled against his autocracy and the stringent discipline. Rival conductors envied his genius. The parsimonious directors were reluctant to meet the endless expenses which Mahler's restudied productions of *Fidelio*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Don Giovanni* incurred. In 1907 Mahler demanded the necessary funds for a new production of the entire *Ring des Nibelungen*. But the directors withheld their permission until the last moment. There was opposition even from the Emperor. Mahler had pensioned off a tenor whose day as a singer was over. Yet, because of Kathi Schrott's intercession, the Emperor demanded his reinstatement.

There was trouble, too, at Mahler's concerts with the Vienna Philharmonic. Here as at the Court Opera he fought against tradition in his interpretations. But many critics refused to understand his aims. Some of them criticized him severely for his "autocratic interpretations of classical masterpieces" and for his "occasional meddling, for mere purposes of effect, with Beethoven's instrumentation." When, in February of 1901, Mahler conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with slight alterations in the instrumentation, the critics rose to war against such "tampering."

Mahler was weary of endless bickerings. He refused to make compromises. He knew that he could remain in Vienna no longer.

On October 15, 1907, he gave one of his greatest performances with Beethoven's *Fidelio*. It was his eloquent valedictory. Shortly before this he had secretly handed in his resignation, and it had been accepted.

"In place of the perfect achievement of my dreams, I have left behind only incomplete fragments, as man is ever destined to do," Mahler wrote in a farewell to his fellow artists. The day after his departure his farewell message, which had been posted prominently, was torn down and destroyed.

On December 9, 1907, he left for America. Here he continued working with his extraordinary zeal and slavish devotion as a conductor at the Metropolitan Opera House, and then with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. On September 12, 1910, after harrowing rehearsals, he conducted in Munich the first performance of the Eighth Symphony. That winter he was back in America to fulfill a rigorous schedule of sixty-five concerts.

He had for years suffered from a heart affliction. Under the strain of work he broke down. He collapsed in New York on February 21, 1911. A streptococcus infection set in. He was taken to Paris for serum treatments, but his physicians could do nothing for him. He asked to be taken back to Vienna, and there he died on May 18, 1911.

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## 6

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THE men who came close to Mahler and understood him never lost the sense of indebtedness to him. He had the great faculty of impressing younger men with his own reverence for art and insatiable passion for perfection. Of his younger disciples, Bruno Walter remained most devoted to him. At the age of eighteen—then already an accomplished musician—he had come to Mahler in

Hamburg. Mahler was so impressed with the knowledge and genius of the young German, that he attached him to himself from that moment. They were both Jews—and Walter, like Mahler, was often to pay the penalty for his racial ancestry. In Hamburg, and later in Vienna, he stood by Mahler's side, grew in knowledge and understanding—even as Mahler himself grew. After his master's death he became his most zealous apostle.

It was Bruno Walter who directed the first performances of *Das Lied von der Erde* in Munich and in Vienna, and of the Ninth Symphony in Vienna. It was Walter who, twenty-five years after Mahler's death, directed the Mahler Festival in Vienna, in which were included the greater works of his teacher. Throughout the hard, bitter years which beset both men as they worked side by side and fought a daily battle with ignorance and indifference and hatred—Mahler always had the encouraging word for the younger man: "*Nur Mut und Kopf oben.*"—"Only courage and head high."

Mahler's death brought to an end the greatest epoch in the history of the Court Opera. Thereafter there were brilliant moments—recollections, as it were, of the ten years that had preceded. But where a man of Mahler's genius and uncompromising spirit could not survive, it was not to be expected that lesser men should. Bruno Walter remained in Vienna until 1912, and he saw the fate of the Opera pass into other and less sympathetic hands.

Felix Weingartner, who succeeded Mahler as director of the Opera—great musician as he was in his own right—could not fail to be oppressed by the weight of Mahler's influence at the Hofoper. From every point of view he was the antipode of his predecessor—mentally and

musically conservative, emotionally almost severe, the classicist with a religious reverence for tradition. Musically he was out of sympathy with the newer tendencies. He was greatest in Beethoven and Mozart, and least sympathetic when he produced—almost against his will—Richard Strauss' *Elektra*. For a time he felt—how justly, few can tell—that Mahler's disciples had banded together to thwart him; and he was inclined to blame a great deal of censure and hostility, from whatever sources they came, on the apostles of the unfortunate Jew. It is not inconceivable that once Mahler was gone his true greatness may suddenly have struck the Austrians. They may have come to regard Weingartner's innovations—directed chiefly against Mahler's stage reforms—as sacrilege. It is not inconceivable that other—and less laudable—elements played their part in Weingartner's attacks on the Mahler tradition. For three years Weingartner reigned, and then gave up in despair.

Thereafter nothing much mattered at the Court Opera. While Bruno Walter was there—for two more years—there were brilliant performances. But the regimen changed hands frequently, and the preeminence of the Court Opera—bought with the lifeblood of at least one great man—was definitely at an end.

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## 7

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DEAD men came into posthumous glory—Bruckner, Hugo Wolf and even Mahler. But toward the creative living there was the old, unsparing hostility. If Richard Strauss no longer shocked the Viennese with his heretical

tone poems or even *Elektra*, Debussy was whistled down and banished for his *Afternoon of a Faun* and *La Mer*.

The worship of the dead sucked life from the living. None came to know this better than another of Mahler's disciples—Arnold Schönberg. To challenge the sweetness and light, the *Süsslichkeit*, of the Ringstrasse, the operetta, and the already traditional Brahms or Bruckner—to attempt to go beyond them—was to the Viennese impertinence. Mahler had taught them to listen to Wagner, but he could not get them to accept Wagner's disciples, his own works, and those of Schönberg. It had always been thus.

Schönberg, in whom a new rasping idiom came to life—an intention to deal cruelly, almost cynically, with tradition—soon felt the full storm of the opposition.

Like so many of the younger men, he was at first a Wagnerite, and his early works were Wagnerian in their utterance. But that did not ensure them a favorable reception. *Verklärte Nacht*—that marvelous sensuous dialogue of man and woman, founded upon a poem of Richard Dehmel—introduced by the Arnold Rosé Quartet in a program including Schönberg's D-minor Quartet, was greeted with hisses and derisive laughter. "From that time on," Schönberg confessed, "the 'scandal' has never ceased."

Rebellion was in the air, the clamor of new ideas. In letters, the first works of Hermann Bahr, Arthur Schnitzler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal; in art, the building of the "Secession" and the founding of the periodical, *Ver Sacrum*.

Artists banded together to war on Ringstrasse Philistinism—for the Beckmessers of art propagated at a

furious pace. Around Schönberg gathered a valiant crew of the newer *Davidsbündler* (among them his brother-in-law, Alexander von Zemlinsky)—the *enfants terribles* of the harsh, new idiom. They founded the Society of Creative Musicians, just as friends of Hugo Wolf had in that composer's lifetime formed a Hugo Wolf Society.

Gustav Mahler, though not altogether sympathetic to them, gave them his aid and used his influence. Besides the work of these younger composers his own seemed banal, antiquated and "sweet." These young men were the Strindbergs of Viennese music, while he was still the Dostoyevsky. But his own generosity brought them audiences, if not always responsive ones.

On January 26, 1905, Schönberg conducted the first performance of his symphonic poem, *Pelléas and Mélisande*, at a concert organized by the Society of Creative Musicians.

The three leaders of the *Verein der schaffenden Tonkünstler* . . . devoted an entire evening to their cause [Ludwig Karpach wrote in *Die Signale*]. The most talented of them—Schönberg—was the most unpalatable. Fully fifty minutes were needed for his continuous symphonic poem, *Pelléas and Mélisande*. Here and there a speck of common sense. Otherwise, for the whole fifty minutes one deals with a man either devoid of all sense or one who takes his listeners for fools. . . . Schönberg's opus is not merely filled with wrong notes . . . but is itself a fifty-minute-long protracted wrong note. This is to be taken literally. What else may hide behind this cacophony it is impossible to ascertain.

Thereafter Schönberg's history in Vienna was a prolonged series of catcalls, abuse and invective. As his experimentation in harmony grew increasingly daring, and his music more and more distorted with cacophony, Vienna became more infuriated with him. It seemed

that Schönberg was practicing a wilfull, almost unholy, perversion of his art; and while the Viennese affects cynicism, he palliates it with a languid sentimentalism.

But unabashed cynicism he fears and reviles.

Schönberg's innovations led him into an open attack on the beautiful, the sweet and the sentimental. His harmonies became ugly, strident, almost revolting; when he attempted to transform the existing scales into what he called the "twelve-tone system," it seemed to many that the Ringstrasse and all the king's horses were doomed.

And so his newer works, between 1909 and 1913, were a staggering accumulation of ugliness: the *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, the *Six Pieces for Piano*, the song cycle, *Pierrot Lunaire*, and the two pieces for the stage, *Erwartung* and *Die glückliche Hand*. For Schönberg, antiromantic and antitraditional, sought to reduce music to its essentials—groped after a simplicity that was almost barren, both in orchestration and in harmony. And here were the stridency, the ugliness and the shameless directness of a new era.

Young disciples gathered around him—Alban Berg, Erwin Stein, Anton Webern, Egon Wellesz. In March, 1913—one year before the World War—they gave a concert of representative works by the Schönberg school. The program included Anton Webern's *Six Orchestral Pieces*, Schönberg's *Kammersymphonie* and Alban Berg's *Two Orchestral Songs*. It was characteristic that the concert should have been broken up by fist fights. It was Vienna's last futile blow to ward off disenchantment. For Schönberg and his disciples were holding up a mirror to the Viennese Caliban, and Caliban found the sight revolting.

## 8

AT bottom Vienna had remained a beautiful provincial town. With the same vehemence with which she had fought against new music, she had always set herself against newer ideas. In a sense, she had always been the rearguard of European culture, at least twenty years or so late in the recognition of change. Was not the Ringstrasse, of which the Viennese were inordinately proud, in itself an epitome of past greatness, touched with only the slightest suggestion of modernity? The Burgtheater was suspicious of the new drama, the Hofoper suspicious of new music, the great Philharmonic suspicious of newer composers.

But time, history and the exigency of her own internal problems forced her to open her eyes. From beyond the borders—from France, Germany, Russia and the Scandinavian countries—new ideas made their slow way into the city's intellectual life. Toward the end of the century had come Zola, Strindberg, Ibsen, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, with their divergent awareness of the problems of the time and their conflicting answers. Even Viennese *Gemütlichkeit* could not long remain aloof from them. Perhaps the buildings of the Ringstrasse did not really solve all problems? . . .

Modernism meant heresy. A reactionary State, Church and a rich middle class fought it with all the weapons they could muster. What scandal was created—as late as 1910!—by the simple architectural designs of Adolf Loos, whose chaste and severe style, revealed in the house on the Michaelerplatz, made baroque Vienna gasp! Or

earlier—what dismay, at the Pre-Raphaelite romanticism of Klimt's paintings, or the construction of the "Secession" hall with its shocking, almost archaic, simplicity!

From France came strange new voices—the sturdy and shameless naturalism of Zola, with its recognition of the existence of dirt, drabness and an oppressed working class. Men like Karl Schönherr responded to him, and for the first time found courage to embody the contemporary conflicts of Church and State, liberalism and reaction, in their plays.

From France, too, came the decadent enchantment of aestheticism and symbolism—the poetry of Baudelaire and Mallarmé. This was to find an even more fruitful soil in Vienna.

Out of the new soil rose "Young Austria"—Hermann Bahr, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Arthur Schnitzler, the last blossoms of a dying civilization. But these were only distantly aware of death. To them it seemed at first that a new and greater day was being born. Hermann Bahr, who more perhaps than any other of this group was caught up in the impulses that came from France, wrote many years later: "I mistook the dying afterglow for the first blush of dawn, and the smiling death of Austria for a holy springtide."

And who better symbolizes the element of decay than the poet, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, author of the texts for Richard Strauss' *Elektra* and *Rosenkavalier*? Half Jew, half Catholic, proud aristocrat—he was the poet of the new aestheticism. The separation of art from daily existence, the cultivation of an aristocratic passion for beauty, the passion for what he himself has called the "poesy of the bibelot"—the nurturing, in short, of an art free from

lower- and middle-class perplexities, moral problems and "materialism," dedicated to the sensuous appreciation of beauty—these gospels he preached passionately. He strove for the removal of the artist from the sordid market places of the world to the museum—for a constant communion with deathless, yet dead, beauty. Who strove so hard as he to bar the gates of his retreat against the ugly assault of middle-class life—Parliaments, political squabbles, and social turmoil—only to find in the end the walls come toppling around him?

And Arthur Schnitzler? In whom else is the disintegration of Austria so clearly foreshadowed? Where else is cynicism so touched with sadness? Where is the decline of moral and intellectual values in an upper and a middle class so clearly depicted—and the forewarning of certain decline so strongly announced as in *Anatol*, *Liebelei*, *Professor Bernhardt* and *Reigen*? Here is eroticism devoid of sentiment; love without feeling; languor and cynicism and moral indifference, in place of certainty and action. More clearly than any other of the Austrians, Schnitzler saw the moral suicide of old Austria, whose decay he endowed with a halo of beauty.

Yet it is characteristic of these men that they kept on looking upward—up to the Emperor, up to the towers of St. Stephen's, up to the Belvedere, up to the glory of old Austria. And when they looked up they were, like Schnitzler, filled with incomparable sadness and a sense of despair. Had they looked down they might have seen below them vast masses of people, becoming more and more articulate, in whom they could have found new sources of strength and courage.

Always undisturbed by crude realities, the waltz persisted through the years. Johann Strauss was dead, but his younger brother, Eduard, who was also a conductor and a composer in his own right, continued the Strauss heritage until 1902. In that year the Strauss orchestra, which had continued uninterrupted for seventy-six years, was disbanded.

But there were other worthy heirs of Strauss.

Franz Lehár.

Son of a regimental band leader in Prague, he came to Vienna and became conductor in the Theater an der Wien. In 1905, when he was thirty-five years old, he composed *The Merry Widow*, presented at the Theater an der Wien. Who does not know the plot—or who now *does*?—of Prince Danilo and the charming heiress of Marsovia? Who does not recognize its music? The waltzes, the *Vilia Song*, the *Girls at Maxim's*—here was still the old Strauss flavor. The text was brighter, more modern than that of the *Fledermaus*. The music was no less enchanting. Like the *Fledermaus*, *The Merry Widow* circled the globe: 778 performances in London; 242 in New York. By January, 1919, 600 times in Vienna!

Follow the gay procession of operettas to which Viennese hearts throbbed: Lehár's *Count of Luxembourg*; or, in 1908, Oscar Straus's *Waltz-Dream* (saddest and most beautiful of recent waltzes), or his *Chocolate Soldier* (Shavian irony in three-quarter time!); or Leo Fall's *The Dollar Princess*.

Suddenly a mythical kingdom is transformed into a very real and ominous Serbia; gay officers are recalled to workaday regiments; the ever-distant swish of feet across waxed floors is lost in the thunder of marching men.

1914 . . .

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IN June, 1914, the Austrian army was preparing for maneuvers in Bosnia. There had been warnings in Vienna that in the increased tenseness of the moment the Serbs might seriously resent the show of force at their very borders. There had been rumors of threats. But Francis Ferdinand obeyed imperial orders and set out with his wife to take charge. Was it blindness, stupidity or willful negligence on the part of the court that dictated this doom? On June 28, 1914, in Sarajevo, a Bosnian student, belonging to the Serbian nationalist movement, fired at the imperial couple and killed them.

For a moment the Emperor was crushed. But he recovered himself quickly. He, who had feared that after his death an heir of Francis Ferdinand's might ascend the throne, now saw the principle of legitimacy vindicated by divine power.

"The Almighty," he said, "cannot be defied with impunity. The order which I, alas! have not had the strength to maintain, has now been restored by the Supreme Will."

On July 23 an ultimatum, framed by Count Berchtold, was dispatched to Serbia. "No negotiations—unconditional acceptance alone will do," Berchtold instructed the envoy at Belgrade. The ultimatum demanded suppression of all anti-Austrian propaganda, arrest of all those even distantly implicated in the murder, and Austrian participation in the inquiry.

The Serbian government's reply was "unsatisfactory"—as the war party in Austria had hoped it would be. The

military clique clamored for war. The Emperor, however, still hesitated. Finally, an invented "provocation" on the part of Serbia swayed him.

On July 28, he signed the declaration of war. "If the Monarchy must go down," he said to his chief of staff, "let us go down in honor."

He was saved the ignominy and despair of witnessing the fulfillment of his words. He died on November 21, 1916, two years before the Habsburg Monarchy was dismembered.

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## EPILOGUE

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The old Vienna died during the World War.

The new Vienna, child of sorrow and suffering, fought for sixteen years to preserve an uncertain existence. She had been brought to life by men and women who, in 1918, fought to establish a new order.

A poor city, beset by enemies within the house and without, she could scarcely find time, money or energy to create and foster art. Too poor to attract the great talents of the world—except on infrequent occasions—too young as yet to rear her own, she was now more than ever forced to rely upon her past splendors.

Enmity and treason within undermined her. In February, 1934, was begun the work that was completed four years later by the Nazi annexation. Gone was every vestige of a free culture and a free art. Gone the old charm and *Gemütlichkeit*. Martial music replaced the waltz in the café-house. Franz Lehár rewrote *The Merry Widow* to conform to the edicts of the Nazi *Kulturkammer*. The bust of Mahler was removed from the vestibule of the Hofoper, and Mahlerstrasse was renamed. The last of the great creative spirits fled abroad—Bruno Walter, Lotte Lehmann, Arnold Rosé, Stefan Zweig, Max Reinhardt, Sigmund Freud, Arnold Schönberg, Erich Korngold, Alexander von Zemlinsky.

Wherever these may be, they proclaim the indestructibility of art and the freedom of the human spirit, out of which will be born another, and perhaps greater Vienna.

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CALDARA



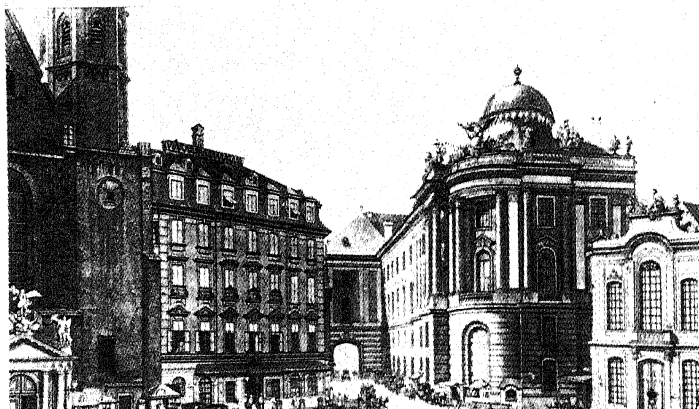
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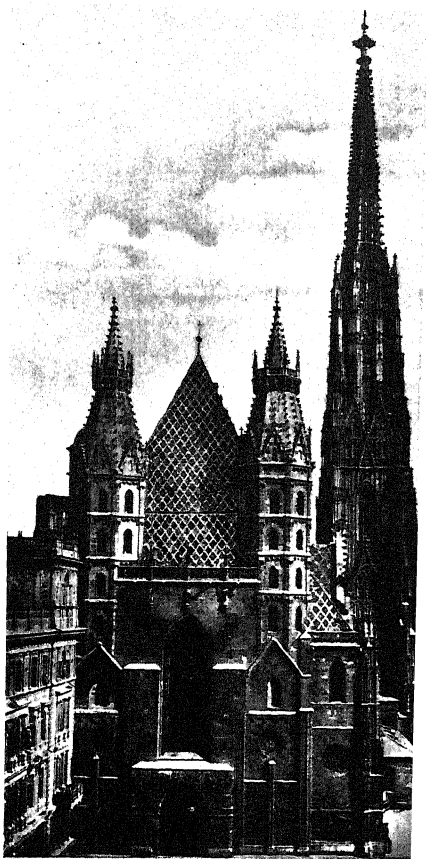
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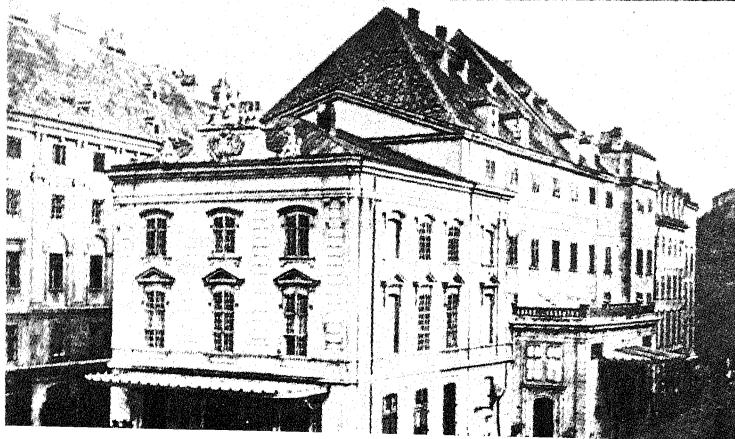
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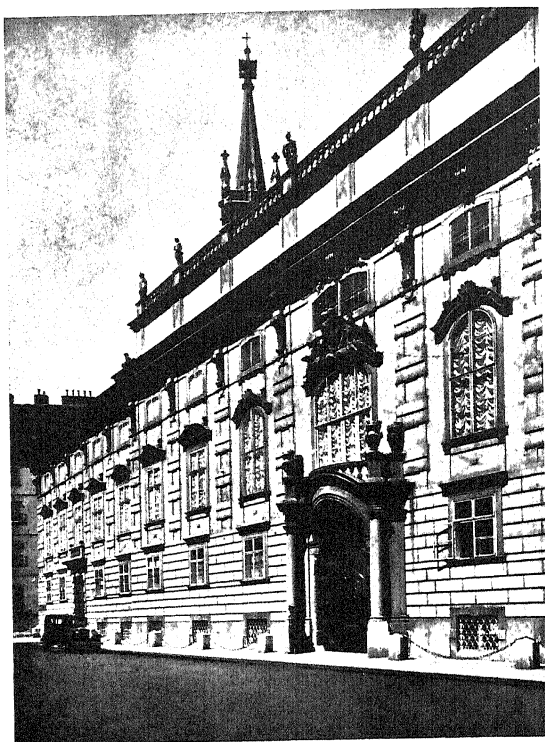
ST. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL



KÄRTNERTOR-THEATER



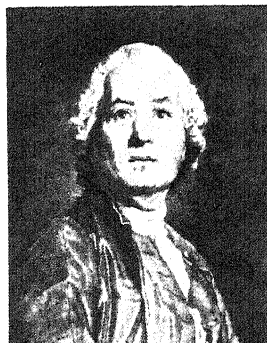
LOBKOWITZ  
PALACE



METASTASIO

GLUCK

DURAZZO





JOSEPH II



MARIA THERESA

MOZART

At the age of six, in the costume given him by  
Maria Theresa.



SCHÖNBRUNN



WOLFGANG MOZART



CONSTANCE MOZART

JOSEPH HAYDN



ESTERHÁZY

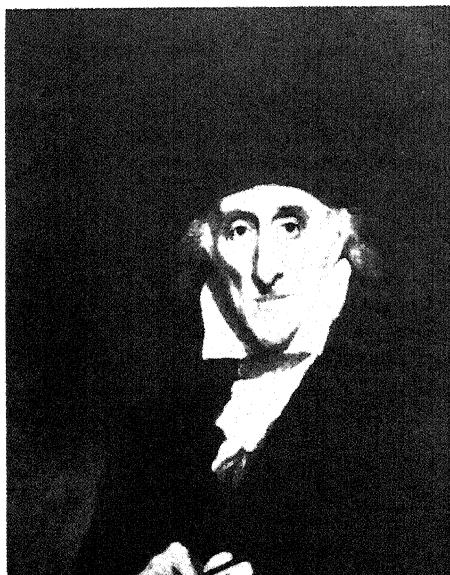


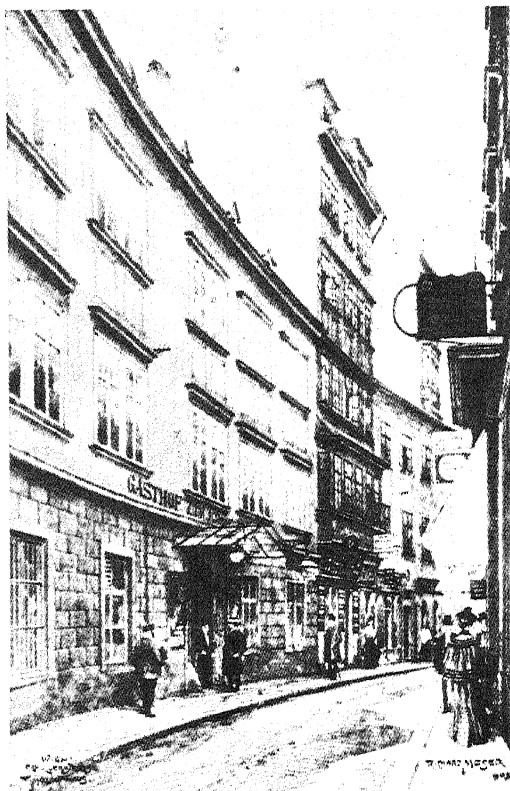
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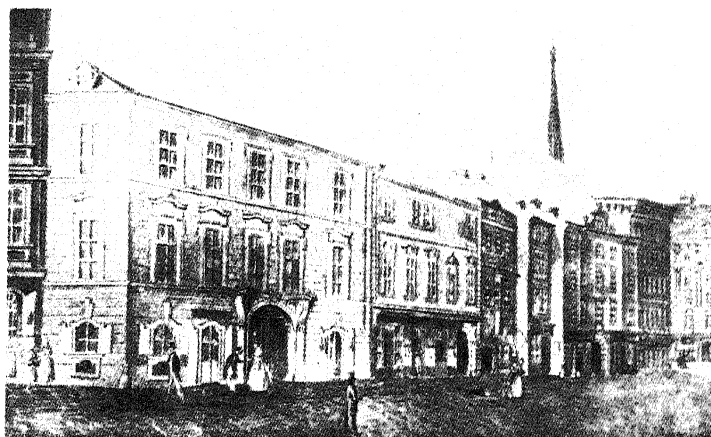


VAN SWIETEN





SCHULERSTRASSE  
Mozart's residence which  
Haydn visited frequently.



RAUHENSTEINGASSE  
Where Mozart died.



BEETHOVEN



SCHUPPANZIGH



VON BREUNING



SCHINDLER



LICHNOWSKY

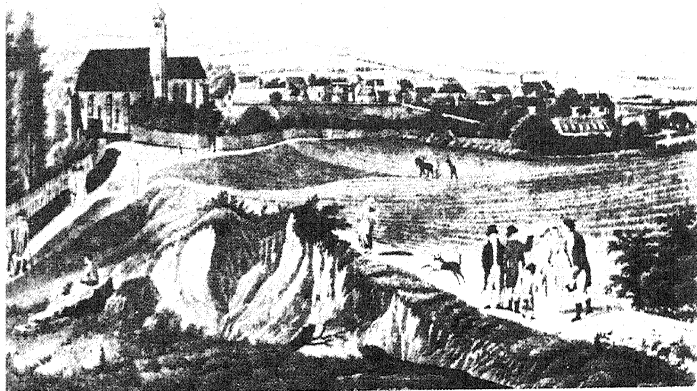


ANSELM HÜTTENBRENNER

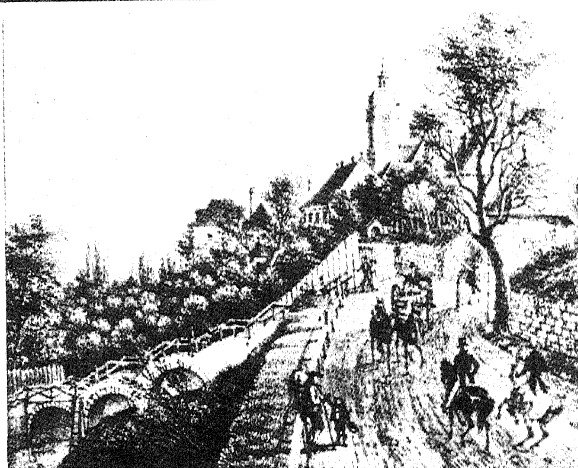
GESELLSCHAFT  
DER MUSIKFREUNDE



THEATER AN DER WIEN



HEILIGENSTADT



DÖBLING



BEETHOVEN'S HOUSE IN HEILIGENSTADT

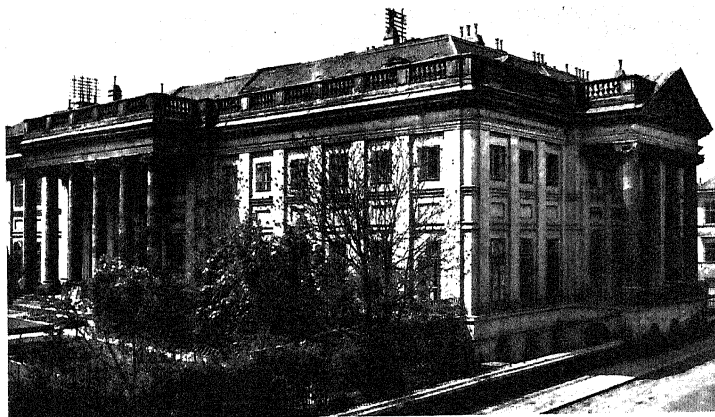
METTERNICH



FERDINAND I



RASOUMOVSKY



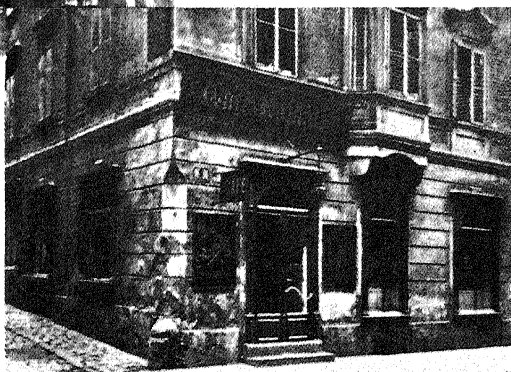
THE RASOUMOVSKY PALACE



SCHUBERT



ZUM GOLDENEN REBBUHN



BOGNER'S CAFE



ZUM GRÜNEN ANKER



ROSSINI

A drawing by Kunike made in Vienna.



WEBER



THE HOUSE  
IN WHICH  
SCHUBERT  
DIED



LISZT



CLARA WIECK



ROBERT SCHUMANN



PAGANINI



CHOPIN IN 1820



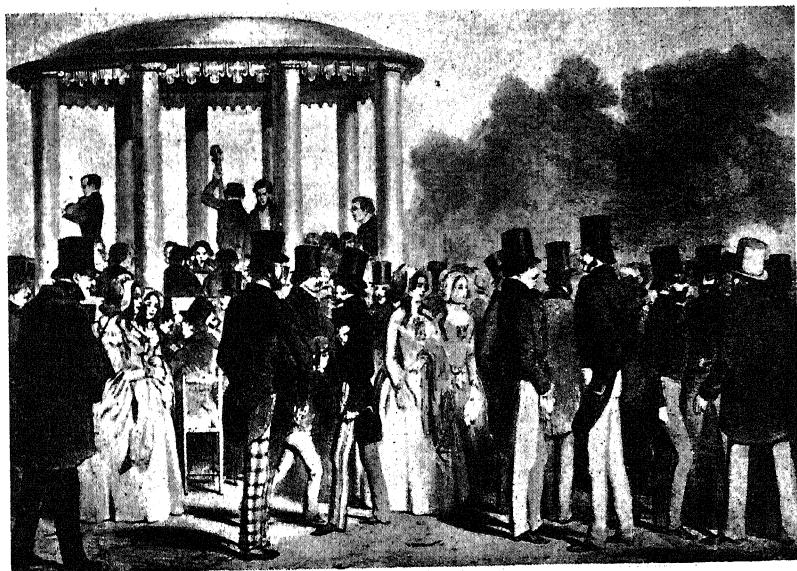
JENNY LIND



LANNER



JOHANN STRAUSS  
THE FATHER



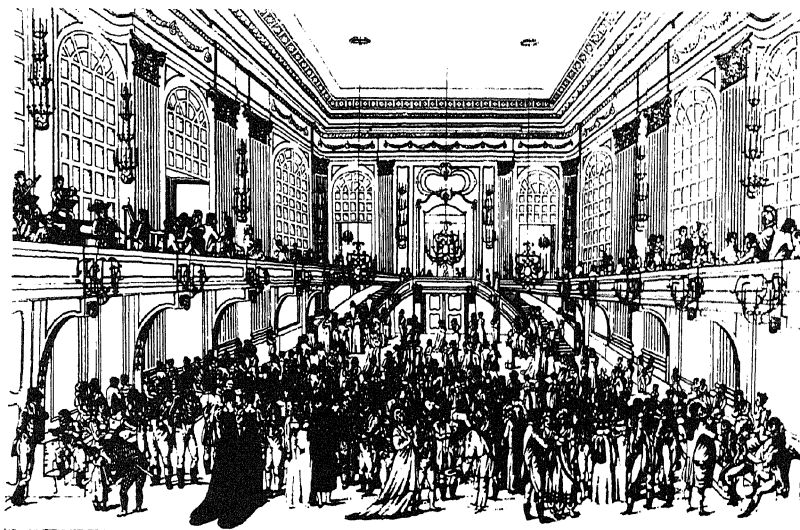
JOHANN STRAUSS, THE FATHER, CONDUCTS IN  
THE VOLKSGARTEN



OFFENBACH IN 1876



JOHANN STRAUSS THE SON



A CARNIVAL BALL IN THE REDOUTENSAAL



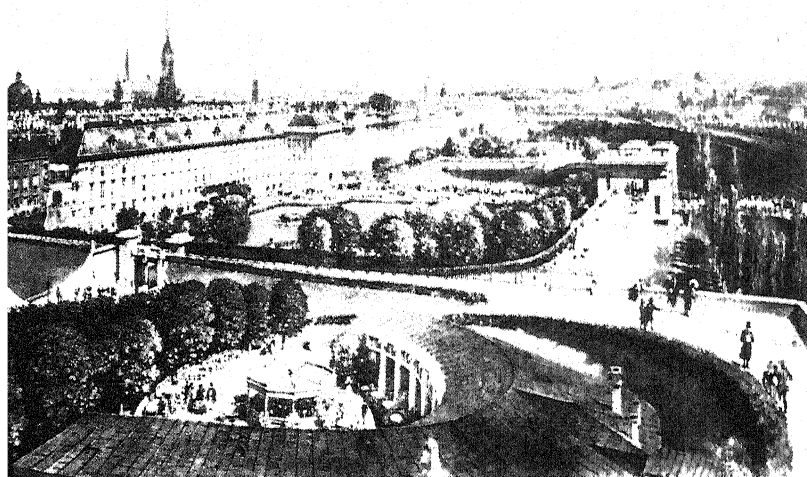
FRANCIS JOSEPH  
Shortly after his marriage  
with Elizabeth.



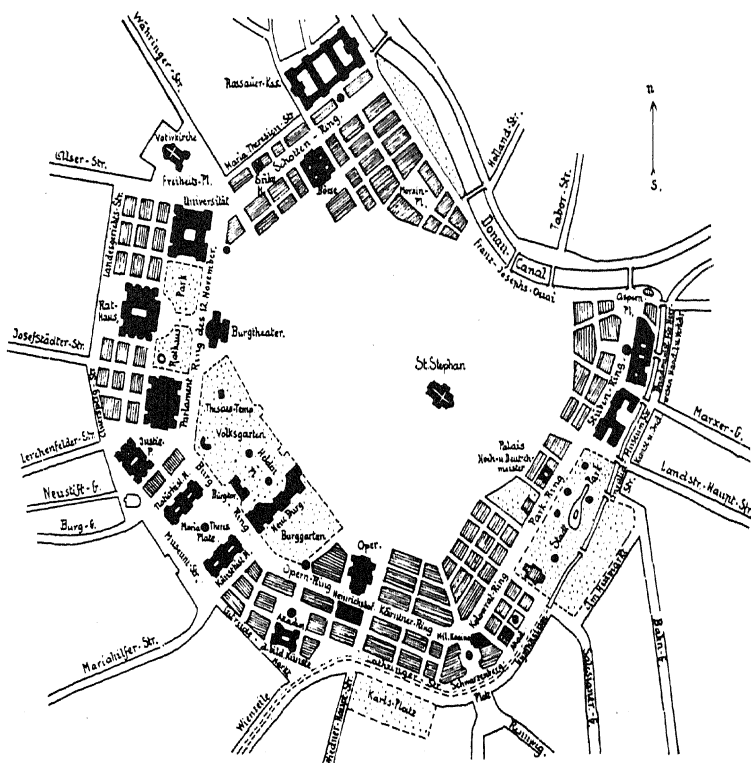
FRANCIS JOSEPH  
at the height of his career.



ELIZABETH



THE PALACE

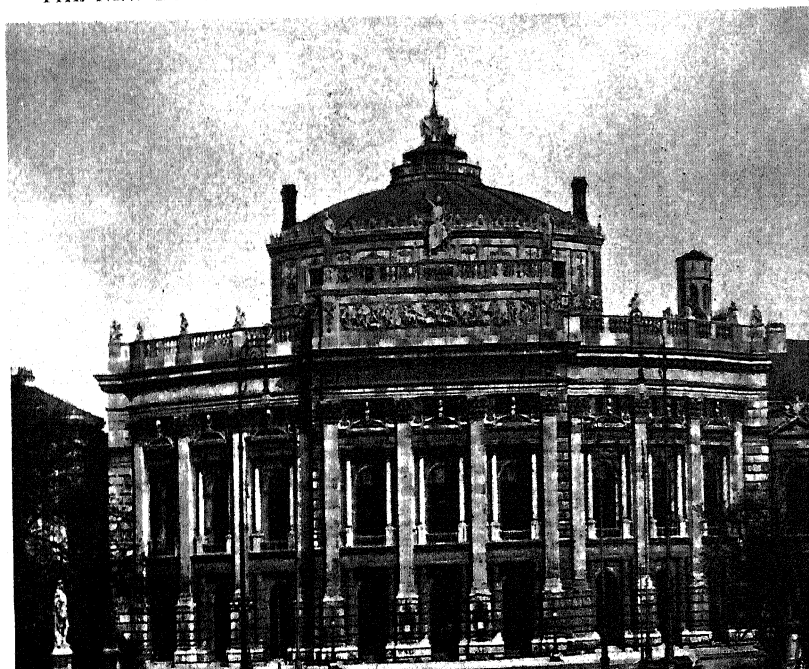


PLAN OF THE NEW RINGSTRASSE



THE NEW HOFOPER

THE NEW BURGTHEATER



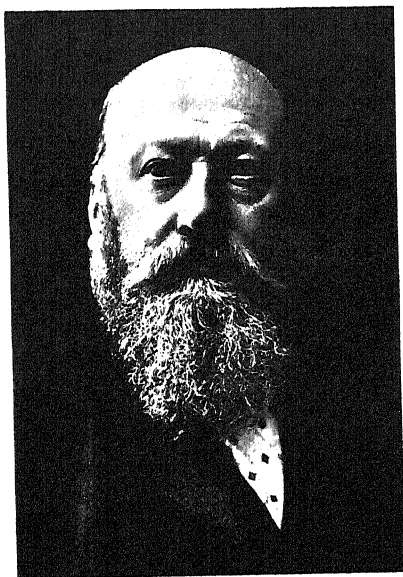


BRAHMS

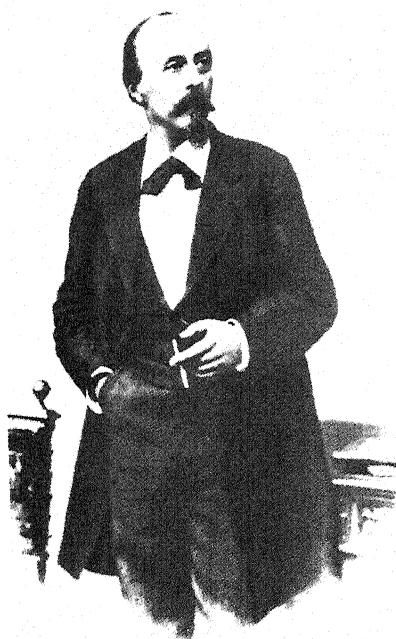


HERBECK

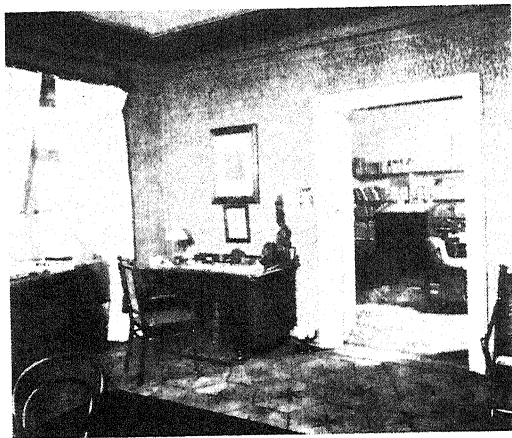
RICHTER



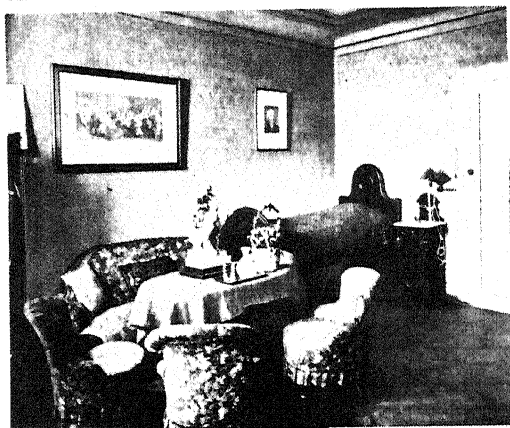
HANSLICK



VON BÜLOW

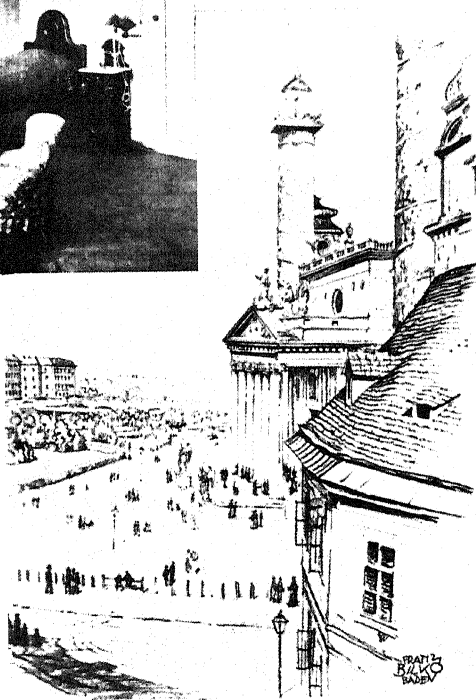


BRAHMS'  
SITTING ROOM  
IN KARLSGASSE 4



BRAHMS'  
BEDROOM IN  
KARLSGASSE 4

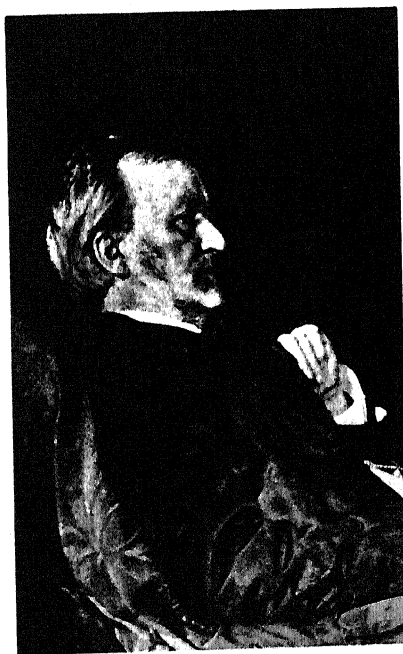
VIEW FROM  
BRAHMS'  
WINDOW





BRUCKNER

WAGNER



HUGO WOLF



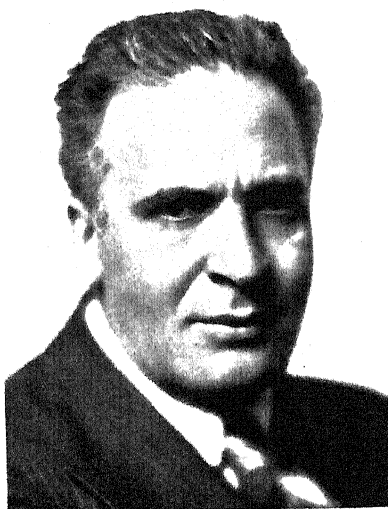


GUSTAV MAHLER



SCHÖNBERG

WEINGARTNER



BRUNO WALTER

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